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Engraved by W. Ridley, from a drawing by W. B. Brown, taken from a Painting of Sir Godfrey Kneller's.

DRYDEN.

Printed for C. Cooke May 1798.

DRYDEN'S POEMS,
 Vol. I forming part of
 Cooke's Pocket Edition of
 the Original & Complete Works of
 SELECT BRITISH POETS,
 or Entertaining Poetical Library
 containing the most Esteemed
 Poetic Productions
 Superbly Embellished.



Published under the direction of
 His Majesty's Lord Chancellor Hyde.

C. Cooke Sept. 1798.
 Vol. I. Page 98. Size 102.

THE
POETICAL WORKS
OF
JOHN DRYDEN.
WITH
THE LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

Cooke's Edition.

Hear how Timotheus' vary'd lays surprise,
And bid alternate passions fall and rise---
The pow'r of music all our hearts allow,
And what Timotheus was is DRYDEN now. *Pope.*

Behold where DRYDEN's less presumptuous car
Wide o'er the fields of glory bear
Two couriers of ethereal race
With necks in thunder cloath'd, and long-resounding pace.
Hark, his hands the lyre explore,
Bright-ey'd Fancy hov'ring o'er,
Scatters from her pictur'd urn
Thoughts that breathe, and words that burn.
But ah! 'tis heard no more--- *Gray.*

VOL. I.

EMBELLISHED WITH SUPERB ENGRAVINGS.

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Ireland.

[A98]

**Eigentum
der Stadt Bamberg**

Gruppe:

Zahl:



THE
POETICAL WORKS
OF
JOHN DRYDEN.

CONTAINING HIS

ASTRAEA REDUX,	HEROIC STANZAS,
ANNUS MIRABILIS,	SATIRE ON THE DUTCH,
BRITANNI REDIVIVA,	MACFLECNOC,
RELIGIO LAICI,	THE MEDAL,
&c. &c. &c.	

But see where artful DRYDEN next appears,
Grown old in rhyme, but charming e'en in years!
Great DRYDEN next! whose tuneful Muse affords
The sweetest numbers and the fittest words.
Wh' ther in comic sounds or tragic airs
She forms her voice, she moves our smiles or tears.
If satire or heroic strains she writes,
Her hero pleases, and her satire bites.
From her no harsh unartful numbers fall;
She wears all dresses, and she charms in all.

Addison.

London:
PRINTED AND EMBELLISHED
Under the Direction of
C. COOKE.

LIFE OF DRYDEN.

DR. JOHNSON, whose memoirs of Dryden are universally admitted to excel, in point of style and accuracy, the productions of all other biographers, observes, that the life of the great poet he was about to delineate, required a display more ample than could be given by him; for his contemporaries, however they revered genius, left his life unwritten; nothing, therefore, can be known beyond what casual mention and uncertain tradition have supplied. From the best authorities that could be procured, the following memorials have been collected.

John Dryden, justly denominated “the great high priest of all the nine,” and “the father of English criticism,” was born on the 9th of August, 1631, at Aldwincle, near Oundle, a village in the county of Northampton. He was the son of Erasmus Dryden, Esq. of Tichmarsh, who was the third son of Sir Erasmus Dryden, Baronet, of Canon’s Ashley, in the said county, but descended from a family originally settled in Huntingdonshire.

Derrick, one of his biographers, reports, that he inherited, from his father, an estate of two hundred a year, and that he was bred an Anabaptist; but Dr. Johnson remarks, that though he had many enemies, who undoubtedly examined his life with a scrutiny sufficiently malicious, he had never been charged with waste of his patrimony, or considered as a deserter from another religion; and therefore infers, that there was no authority for either of those particulars.

He was educated at Westminster school, as one of the King’s scholars, under Dr. Busby, where he wrote a paper on the death of Lord Hastings, which abounds in such conceits, as the example of Cowley still kept in reputation. Johnson, with his usual spirit, remarks, that “as Lord Hastings died of the small pox, his poet has made of the pustules first rosebuds, and then gems, and at last exalts them into stars; and says,

“No comet need foretel his change drew on,
“Whose corpse might seem a constellation.”

In 1650, he was elected to one of the Westminster scholarships in the University of Cambridge, and went off to Trinity College. In 1653, he took his degree of Bachelor of Arts; and, on the death of Cromwell in 1658, published *Heroic Stanzas on the Lord Protector*, which had merit sufficient to raise great expectations of the rising poet.

When the King was restored, Dryden, like other panegyrists of Cromwell, changed his opinion, or his profession, and published "*Astrea Redux*," a poem on the happy restoration and return of his most sacred Majesty King Charles the Second. For this production he shared the reproach of inconstancy with Waller and others, and exposed himself to the ridicule of the wits by the following remarkable couplet in the beginning of the poem.

"An horrid stillness first invades the ear,
And in that silence we a tempest fear."

Dr. Johnson intimates that he was persecuted with more ridicule than he deserved, and makes a comment on the lines to palliate the error imputed to the author. The same year he offered an eulogium to the new king in a second poem on his restoration.

In 1661 he wrote a copy of verses "on the death of Prince Henry and Princess Mary," inserted in the *Tbreni Cantabrigienses* of that year, and another on the marriage of King Charles the Second. It appears from his signature, that in 1662, he had obtained a fellowship, for that academical honour does not attend his name in any signature of the year preceding.

It is very judiciously remarked, by one of Dryden's biographers, that if the two last mentioned poems had been seen by Dr. Johnson, before the publication of his excellent life of Dryden, that great writer would certainly have made some alteration in the following paragraph.

"At the university he does not appear to have been eager of poetical distinction, or to have lavished his early wit either on fictitious subjects, or public occasions. He probably considered that he who purposed to be an author, ought first to be a student. He obtained, whatever was the reason, no fellowship in the college. Why he was excluded cannot be known, and it is vain to guess; had he thought himself injured, he knew how to complain. It was not till the death of Cromwell, in 1658, that he became a public candidate for fame."

The same year he addressed a poem to the Lord Chancellor Hyde, and published *A Satire on the Dutch*; and, as a proof of his early reputation for knowledge, was chosen a member of the Royal Society, soon after the formation of that institution.

The time at which Dryden's first play was exhibited is not certainly known, because it was not printed till it was some years afterwards altered and revised. But if the plays are printed in the order in which they were written; from the dates of some, those of others may be inferred; and thus
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it may be collected, that in 1663, in the thirty-second year of his life, he commenced a writer for the stage, of which he kept possession many years; not, indeed, without the competition of rivals, who sometimes prevailed, or the censure of critics, which was often poignant, and often just, but with such a degree of reputation, as encouraged him to exercise his genius in composing eight-and-twenty dramatic pieces. Though they do not appear in the collection to which this narrative is prefixed, we think it necessary to enumerate them, as the composition of so many dramas include too much of a poetical life to be with propriety omitted.

His first piece was a comedy called *The Wild Gallant*. He began with no happy auguries; for his play met with such indifferent success, that had not necessity compelled him to persevere, the English stage had, perhaps, never been favoured with some of its brightest ornaments. This play was revised and printed in 1669.

In 1664, he published the *Rival Ladies*, which he dedicated to the Earl of Orrery, a nobleman of high reputation both as a writer and a statesman. In this play he made his essay in dramatic rhyme, which he defends in his dedication, with a sufficient certainty of a favourable hearing; for Orrery was himself a writer of rhyming tragedies.

He then joined with Sir Robert Howard in the *Indian Queen*, a tragedy in rhyme; but the parts which he wrote are not distinguished.

In 1667, he produced the *Indian Emperor*, a tragedy in rhyme, intended for a sequel to Howard's *Indian Queen*, of which notice was given to the audience by printed bills, distributed at the door of the theatre, an expedient which is supposed to be ridiculed in the *Rehearsal*, where Bayes tells how many reams he has printed, to instil into the audience some conception of the plot.

The practice of writing tragedies in rhyme was introduced soon after the restoration, as it seems, by the Earl of Orrery, in compliance with the opinion of Charles the Second, who had formed his taste by the French theatre; and Dryden, who, according to his own declaration, wrote only to please, therefore composed rhyming tragedies, till, by the prevalence of manifest propriety, he seems to have grown ashamed of making them any longer. To this play is prefixed a very vehement defence of dramatic rhyme, in confutation of the preface to the "*Duke of Larna*," in which Sir Robert Howard has censured it.

In 1667, he published *Annus Mirabilis*, the *Year of Wonders*,

ders, which is esteemed one of his most elaborate performances. It is written in quatrains, or heroic stanzas of four lines, a measure which he borrowed from the *Gondibert* of Davenant, and which, in his prefatory address to Sir Robert Howard, he says, "I have ever judged more noble and of greater dignity than any other verses in use among us."

Dryden's fame had now risen so high, that, on the death of Sir William Davenant in 1668, he was appointed poet laureat. The same year he published his *Essay on Dramatic Poetry*, an elegant and instructive dialogue, in which we are told, by Prior, the principal character is meant to represent the Earl of Dorset. He also produced, about the same time, *Secret Love*, or the *Maiden Queen*, a tragi-comedy, and *Sir Martin Marall*, a comedy, published without preface or dedication, and, at first, without the name of the author. A contemporary writer charges this, like most of the other pieces, with plagiarism. It was said, that the Duke of Newcastle gave this play to Dryden, who adapted it to the stage, and it is entered on the books of the Stationers Company, as the production of that nobleman.

The *Tempest* is an alteration of Shakespeare's play made by Dryden, in conjunction with Davenant, "whom," says he, "I found of so quick a fancy, that nothing was proposed to him from which he could not suddenly produce a thought, extremely pleasant and surprising; and therefore thoughts of his, contrary to the Latin proverb, were not always the least happy; and, as his fancy was quick, so, likewise, were the products of it remote and new. He borrowed not of any other, and his imaginations were such, as could not easily enter into any other man."

The effect produced by two such powerful minds was, that to Shakespeare's monster, *Caliban*, is added, a sister monster *Sycorax*; and a woman, who, in the original play, had never seen a man, is, in this, brought acquainted with a man that had never seen a woman. This play was first exhibited in 1670.

About this time, appeared a tragedy, called *The Empress of Morocco*, written in rhyme, by *Elkanah Settle*; the success of which, together with its having been the first play embellished with engravings, seems greatly to have discomposed the mind of Dryden; who, actuated by what he called indignation, and others jealousy, wrote an intemperate critique upon the play and dedication, in which he blends the highest degree of spleen and scurrility.

Of Settle he gives this character. "He's an animal of a most deplored understanding, without conversation; his being

being is in a twilight of sense, and some glimmering of thought, which he can never fashion into wit or English. His style is boisterous and rough-hewn, his rhyme incorrigibly lewd, and his numbers perpetually harsh and ill-sounding. The little talent which he has, is in fancy. He sometimes labours with a thought; but with the pudder he makes to bring it into the world, 'tis commonly still-born; so that, for want of learning and elocution, he will never be able to express any thing either naturally or justly. He has a heavy hand at fools, and a great facility in writing nonsense for them. Fools they will be in spite of him. His King, his two Empresses, his villain and his sub-villain, nay, his hero, have all a certain natural cast of the father, their folly was born and bred in them, and something of the *Elkanah* will be visible.

On this declamatory effusion of our author, Dr. Johnson makes the following judicious remark.

“To see the highest minds thus levelled with the meanest, may produce some solace to the consciousness of weakness, and some mortification to the pride of wisdom. But let it be remembered that minds are not levelled in their powers, but when they are first levelled in their desires. Dryden and Settle had both placed their happiness in the claps of multitudes.”

In 1671, *The Mock Astrologer* was produced, with a preface and dedication to the illustrious Duke of Newcastle, whom Johnson says he courts by adding to his praise those of his Lady, not only as a lover, but a partner in his studies; subjoining this remark, “It is unpleasing to think how many names, once celebrated, are since forgotten.” Of Newcastle's works, nothing is now known but his *Treatise on Horsemanship*. The preface is elaborately written, and contains many just remarks on the fathers of the English drama. His criticisms upon tragedy, comedy, and farce, are judicious and profound; and against those that accused him of plagiarism, he alledges a favourable expression of the king. “He only desired that those who accused me of thefts, would steal him plays like mine,” and then relates how much labour he spends in fitting for the English stage what he borrows from others.

The following year he produced another tragedy in rhyme called *Tyrannic Love*, or the *Virgin Martyr*; which has many passages of strength and elegance, and some of empty noise and ridiculous turbulence. The rants of Maximin have always been the sport of criticism, and are said, at length, to have been the shame of the writer. This tragedy

gedy was written before the Conquest of Granada, but published after it. 'The design is to recommend piety,' "I considered," says Dryden, "that pleasure was not the only end of poetry, and that even the instructions of morality were so wholly the business of a poet, as that precepts and examples of piety were to be omitted; for to leave that employment altogether to the clergy, were to forget that religion was first taught in verse, which the laziness or dulness of succeeding priesthood turned afterwards into prose." "Thus foolishly," Dr. Johnson observes, "could Dryden write, rather than not shew his malice to the parsons."

Of the *Conquest of Granada* the Doctor gives the following account. "The two parts of the *Conquest of Granada* are written with a seeming determination to glut the public with dramatic wonders, to exhibit in its highest elevation a theatrical meteor of incredible love, and impossible valour, and to leave no room for a wilder flight to the extravagance of posterity. All the rays of romantic heat, glow in Almanzor by a kind of concentration. He is above all law; he is exempt from all restraints; he ranges the world at will, and governs wherever he appears. He fights without inquiring the cause, and lives in spite of the obligations of justice, of rejections by his mistress, and of prohibition from the dead. Yet, the scenes are, for the most part, delightful; they exhibit a kind of illustrious depravity, and majestic madness; such as if it is sometimes despised, is often revered, and in which the ridiculous is mingled with the astonishing." A play thus written, in professed defiance of probability, naturally drew upon itself the severity of criticism. It was censured with much sarcasm, by Martin Clifford, Esq. of the Charter house, and Settle availed himself of the opportunity of taking his revenge, in an answer, perhaps, equal in scurrility and invective to Dryden's censure of his play, which is no very high commendation.

In 1673, he produced two comedies, *Marriage-a-la-mode*, and *the Assignment, or Love in a Nunnery*; the former of which was indifferently received, and the latter driven off the stage. *Amboyna*, a tragedy, intended to inflame the nation against the Dutch, was also written in the course of the same year. The next year he published *The State of Innocence and the Fall of Man*, an opera, or rather, a tragedy in heroic rhyme, but of which the personages are such as cannot be decently exhibited upon the stage. Dr. Johnson observes that "this composition is addressed to the Princess of Modena, then Duchess of York, in a strain of flattery which

which disgraces genius, and which it is wonderful that any man who knew the meaning of his own words, could use without self-detestation. It is an attempt to mingle earth and heaven by praising human excellence in the language of religion.

“The reason which he gives for printing what was never acted, cannot be overpassed. ‘I was induced to it in my own defence, many hundred copies of it being dispersed abroad without my knowledge or consent, and every one gathering new faults, it became, at length, a libel against me.’

“These copies, as they gathered faults, were apparently manuscript; and he lived in an age very unlike ours, if many hundred copies of fourteen hundred lines were likely to be transcribed. An author has a right to print his own works, and needs not seek an apology in falsehood; but he that could bear to write the dedication, felt no pain in writing the preface.”

In 1676, he produced *Aureng Zebe*, a tragedy written in rhyme, which has the appearance of being the most elaborate of all his dramas. Dr. Johnson remarks on this play that “the personages are imperial; but the dialogue is often domestic, and therefore susceptible of sentiments, accommodated to familiar incidents. The complaint of life is celebrated, and there are many other passages that may be read with pleasure.”

This play is addressed to the Earl of Mulgrave, afterwards Duke of Buckingham, “himself,” says Johnson, “if not a poet, yet a writer of verses, and a critic.” In this address Dryden gave the first hints of his intention to write an epic poem. He mentions his design in terms so obscure, that he seems afraid lest his plan should be purloined, as he says, happened to him when he told it more plainly in his preface to *Juvenal*. “The design,” says he, “you know, is great, the story English, and neither too near the present times, nor too distant from them.”

All for Love, or the World well lost, a tragedy written in 1678, and founded upon Shakespeare’s *Anthony and Cleopatra* the author tells us “was written for himself; the rest were given to the people.” It is by universal consent accounted the work in which our author has admitted the fewest improprieties of style or character; but Dr. Johnson remarks that “it has one fault equal to many, though rather moral than critical, that by admitting the romantic omnipotence of love, he has recommended as laudable and worthy of imitation, that conduct, which, through all ages,
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the good have censured as vicious, and the bad despised as foolish."

The next year he formed in conjunction with Lee *Oedipus*, a tragedy, from the works of Sophocles, Seneca, and Corneille. Dryden planned the scenes, &c. composed the first and third acts; the rest of the piece was written by Lee. It was followed by *Troilus and Cressida*, a play, altered from Shakespeare, "to which," says Langbaine, "he added several new scenes, and improved what he borrowed from the original. The last scene in the third act is a masterpiece." It is introduced by a *Discourse on the grounds of Criticism in Tragedy*.

His comedy called *Limberham, or the Hind Keeper*, produced in 1680, after the third night, was prohibited as too indecent for the stage. Dryden confesses that its indecency was objected to, but Langbaine, who seldom favours him, imputes its expulsion to resentment, because it "so much exposed the keeping part of the town."

The following year he brought on the stage his *Spanish Fryar, or the Double Discovery*, a tragi-comedy, eminent for the happy coincidence and coalition of the two plots. As it was written against the Papists, it would naturally at that time have friends and enemies; and partly by the popularity it obtained at first, and partly by the real power both of the serious and risible parts, it continued long a favourite of the public. Dr. Johnson observes that "it was Dryden's opinion, at least, for some time, and he maintains it in the dedication of this play, that the drama required an alternation of comic and tragic scenes, and that it is necessary to mitigate by alleviations of merriment, the pressure of ponderous events, and the fatigue of toilsome passions. Whoever," says he, "cannot perform both parts, is but half a writer for the stage."

In 1683, appeared the *Duke of Guise*, a tragedy, written in conjunction with Lee. It happened that a contract had been made between the two poets by which they were to join in writing a play, "and he happened," says Dryden, "to claim the promise just upon the finishing of a poem, when I would have been glad of a little respite. Two thirds of it belonged to him; and to me only the first scene of the play, the whole fourth act, and the first half, or somewhat more of the fifth.

This was a play, written professedly for the party of the Duke of York, whose succession was then opposed. A parallel is intended between the leaguers of France and the covenanters of England; and this intention produced the controversy.

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In 1685, appeared his *Albion and Albania*, a musical drama, or opera, written, like the *Duke of Guise*, against the Whig party, whom Dr. Johnson, with intemperate zeal for the opposite party, calls the republicans. Downes says, that happening to be first performed the very day on which the Duke of Monmouth landed in the West, and the kingdom was in great consternation, it ran but six nights.

Don Sebastian, supposed to have been one of Dryden's early dramatic performances, was not acted till 1690. It appears to have been designed for a tragi-comedy, for amidst the distresses of princes, and the vicissitudes of empires, are inserted several scenes which the writer intended for comic; but which it seems that age did not much commend, and the succeeding would most probably reprobate. There are, however, in this piece, passages of excellence universally acknowledged; and the reconciliation of Dorax and Sebastian has always been admired.

The dedication to *Amphitryon*, a comedy, derived from Plautus and Moliere, is dated October 6, 1690. It succeeded at its first appearance, and has long been considered as a very diverting entertainment, having undergone various alterations and additions.

Soon after he produced *King Arthur*, an opera, the incidents of which are extravagant, and many of them puerile. It was revived some years ago, with alterations, and, taken in a burlesque point of view, has afforded much merriment.

Cleomenes, a tragedy, performed in 1692, is remarkable for having occasioned an incident related in the *Guardian*, and allusively mentioned by Dryden, in his preface. As he came out from the representation, he was thus accosted by some airy stripling. "Had I been left alone with a young beauty, I would not have spent my time like your Spartan."—"That, Sir," said Dryden, "perhaps is true, but give me leave to tell you, that you are no hero."

His last dramatic production, called *Love Triumphant*, a tragi-comedy, appeared in 1694, and is said, like his first essay for the stage, to have been received with much indifference. Thus he began and ended his dramatic labours with ill success.

From the exhibition of such a number of theatrical pieces, it might reasonably be supposed, that our author must have improved his fortune; at least, that such diligence, with such abilities, must have set penury at defiance. But it is to be observed, that in Dryden's time, the drama was not in that universal estimation it has since obtained. The play-house was abhorred by the Puritans, and avoided by those who

desired the character of seriousness or decency. A grave lawyer would, in those times, have debased his dignity, and a young trader impaired his credit, by appearing in those mansions of dissolute licentiousness. The profits of the theatre, when so many classes of the people were deducted from the audience, were not great, and the poet had for a long time but a single night. The first that had two nights was *Southerne*, and the first that had three was *Rozve*; a play, therefore, seldom produced Dryden more than an hundred pounds, by the accumulated gains of the third night, the dedication and the copy.

Dr. Johnson's remarks on the dramatic talents of our author, and the anecdotes he intersperses with them, cannot fail of conducing to the information and entertainment of those readers, who are attached to theatrical exhibitions; to such, therefore, the following are presented.

"Almost every piece had a dedication, written with such elegance and luxuriance of praise, as neither haughtiness nor avarice could be imagined able to resist. But he seems to have made flattery too cheap. That praise is worth nothing of which the price is known.

"To increase the value of his copies, he often accompanied his work with a preface of criticism; a kind of learning then little known, and therefore welcome as a novelty; and of so flexible and applicable a kind, that it might be always introduced, without apparent violence or affectation. By these dissertations, the public judgment must have been much improved; and Swift, who conversed with Dryden, relates, that he regretted the success of his own instructions, and found his readers made suddenly too skilful to be easily satisfied.

"His prologues had such reputation, that, for some time, a play was considered as less likely to be well received, if some of his verses did not introduce it. The price of a prologue was two guineas, till being asked to write one for Mr. Southerne, he demanded three; 'Not,' said he, 'young man, out of disrespect to you, but the players have had my goods too cheap.'

"Though he declares, that, in his own opinion, his genius was not dramatic, he had great confidence in his own fertility; for he is said to have engaged, by contract, to furnish four plays a year; and it is certain that, in one year, he published six complete dramatic productions, with a celerity of performance, which, notwithstanding the charge of plagiarism alledged against him, shews such facility of composition, such readiness of language, and such copiousness of sentiment, as very few authors have possessed."

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He did not enjoy his reputation, however great, nor his profits, however small, without molestation. He had critics to endure, and rivals to oppose. The two most distinguished wits of the nobility, the Duke of Buckingham, and Earl of Rochester, declared themselves his enemies.

Buckingham characterised him, in 1671, by the name of *Bayes*, in the *Rehearsal*, a satirical comedy, called by Johnson a farce, said to be written with the assistance of Butler, the author of *Hudibras*, Martin Clifford, of the Charter House, and Dr. Spratt, the friend of Cowley, then Clifford's chaplain.

Dryden and his friends laughed at the length of time, and the number of hands employed upon this performance, in which, as Dr. Johnson observes, though, by some artifice of action, it yet keeps possession of the stage, it is not possible now to find any that might not have been written without so long a delay, or a confederacy so numerous.

It is said, that this satirical piece was originally intended against Davenant, who, in the first draught, was characterised by the name of *Bilboa*. Davenant had been a soldier and an adventurer.

It is to be observed, that there is one passage in the *Rehearsal* still remaining, which seems to have related originally to Davenant. Bayes hurts his nose, and comes in with brown paper applied to the bruise: how this affected Dryden does not appear. Dr. Johnson remarks, that Davenant's nose had suffered such diminution, by mishaps, among the women, that a patch upon that part evidently denoted him. It is said, likewise, that Sir Robert Howard was once meant. The design was probably to ridicule the reigning poet, whoever he might be.

The *Rehearsal* is represented as ridiculing passages in the *Conquest of Granada*, *Assignment*, *Marriage-a-la-mode*, and *Tyrannic Love*. Much of the personal satire, to which it might owe its first reception, is now lost. Bayes properly imitated the dress, and mimicked the manner of Dryden. The cant words which are so often in his mouth, may be supposed to have been Dryden's habitual phrases, or customary explanations. Bayes, when he is to write, is blooded and purged: this, a contemporary with Dryden relates himself to have heard, was the real practice of the poet.

There were other strokes in the *Rehearsal*, by which malice was gratified. The debate between Love and Honour, which keeps Prince Volocius in a single boot, is said, to have alluded to the Duke of Ormond, who lost Dublin to the rebels, while he was toying with a mistress.

The Earl of Rochester, to suppress the reputation of Dryden, took Settle into his protection, and endeavoured to persuade the public, that their approbation had been to that time misplaced. Settle was a while in high reputation; his *Empress of Morocco*, having first delighted the town, was carried in triumph to Whitehall, and played by the ladies of the court. Rochester, however, in process of time, withdrew his patronage, seeming "resolved," says one of his biographers, "to have a judgment contrary to that of the town."

Dr. Johnson concludes his account of the dramatic productions of our author, with the following remarks:

"Neither critics nor rivals did Dryden much mischief, unless they gained, from his own temper, the power of vexing him, which his frequent bursts of resentment give reason to suspect. He is always angry at some past, or afraid of some future censure; but he lessens the smart of his wounds, by the balm of his own approbation, and endeavours to repel the shafts of criticism, by opposing a shield of adamant confidence."

"The perpetual accusation produced against him was that of plagiarism, against which he never attempted any vigorous defence; for though he was perhaps sometimes injuriously censured, he would, by denying part of the charge, have confessed the rest; and as his adversaries had the proof in their own hands, he, who knew that wit had little power against facts, avoided entering into particulars which it was his interest to suppress, and which, unless provoked by vindication, few were likely to examine."

"Though the life of a writer, from about thirty-five to sixty-three, may be supposed to have been sufficiently busied by the composition of eight-and-twenty pieces for the stage, Dryden found room for many other undertakings. But how much soever he wrote, he was at least suspected of writing more; for in 1679, a paper of verses, called an *Essay on Satire*, was shewn about in manuscript, by which the Earl of Rochester, the Dutchess of Portsmouth, and others, were so much provoked, that they procured Dryden, whom they suspected as the author, to be way laid and beaten. This incident is mentioned by the Duke of Buckinghamshire, the real author, in his art of poetry, where he says of Dryden,

"Though prais'd and beaten for another's rhymes,
His own deserves as great applause sometimes."

His reputation in time was such, that his name was thought necessary to the success of every poetical or literary performance, and therefore he was engaged to contribute something,

something, whatever it might be, to many publications. He wrote the Lives of Plutarch and Lucian, prefixed to the translations of those authors, by several hands; the life of Polybius to the translation of that historian, by Sir Henry Sheers, and a preface to the *Dialogue concerning Women*, by Walth.

He translated the first book of the English *Tacitus*; and if Gordon may be credited, translated it from the French. "Such a charge," says Dr. Johnson, "can hardly be mentioned without some degree of indignation; but it is not, I suppose, so much to be inferred, that Dryden wanted literature necessary to the perusal of Tacitus, as that, considering himself as hidden in a crowd, he had no awe of the public; and writing merely for money, was contented to get it by the nearest way."

In 1680 came out a "Translation of Ovid's Epistles into English verse," by several hands, two of which, together with the preface, were written by Dryden. The Epistle of *Helen to Paris*, is attributed to him and Lord Mulgrave.

In 1681, he published his *Absalom and Architophel*, a severe satire, on the faction of the Duke of Monmouth, and the Earl of Shaftesbury, which was eagerly received and universally read. Dr. Johnson relates, that his father, an old bookseller, told him he had not known the sale of it equalled but by *Sacka-verel's* trial. The well-known character of *Zimri*, in this memorable satire, is severe enough to repay all the ridicule thrown upon him by Buckingham, in the character of *Bayes* in the *Rehearsal*.

Addison attempted to derive the reason of the general perusal of this production from the delight which the mind feels in the investigation of secrets, and thinks that the curiosity to decypher names procured readers to the poem. Upon which Johnson very pointedly remarks, that "there is no need to inquire why those verses were read, which to all the attractions of wit, elegance and harmony, added the co-operation of all the factious passions, and filled every mind with triumph or resentment."

"It could not be supposed that all the provocation given by Dryden would be endured without resistance or reply. Both his person and his party were exposed in their turns, to the shafts of satire, which, though neither so well pointed, nor perhaps so well aimed, undoubtedly had effect."

One of these attempts to retaliate is called *Dryden's Satire on his Muse*, ascribed, though as Pope says, falsely, to Somers, who was afterwards Chancellor. The poem whose soever it was, has much virulence and some sprightliness. The writer

ter tells all the ill that he can collect both of Dryden and his friends.

The poem of Absalom and Achitophel had two answers; one called *Azaria* and *Hushai*, the other *Absalom senior*; the latter of which, Dryden apparently imputes to Settle, by quoting, in his verses against him, the second line. The former has been imputed to him, though it is rather improbable that he should write twice on the same occasion.

The same year Dryden published his *Medal a Satire against Sedition*, which is a severe invective against Shaftesbury and the whig party. In both poems he maintains the same principles, and saw them both attacked by his old antagonist, Elkanah Settle, and with so much success in both encounters, that he left the palm doubtful, and divided the suffrages of the nation.

The following observations of Dr. Johnson respecting the fate and character of Settle are highly deserving of our notice.

“Such are the revolutions of fame, or such is the prevalence of fashion, that the man whose works have not yet been thought to deserve the care of collecting them; who died forgotten in an hospital; and whose latter years were spent in contriving shews for fairs, and carrying an elegy or epithalamium of which the beginning and end were occasionally varied, but the intermediate parts were always the same, to every house where there was a funeral or a wedding; might with truth have had inscribed upon his stone.

“Here lies the Rival and Antagonist of Dryden.”

“Settle was severely chastised by Dryden under the name of *Doeg*, in the second part of *Absalom* and *Achitophel*, and was perhaps, for his factious audacity, made the city poet, whose annual office it was to describe the glories of Lord Mayor’s day. Of these bards he was the last, and seems not much to have deserved even this degree of regard, if it was paid to his political opinions; for he afterwards wrote a panegyric on the virtues of Judge Jeffries, and what more could have been done by the meanest zealot for prerogative?

On the death of Charles II. beginning of the year 1685, he wrote a funeral pindaric poem, sacred to his memory, entitled *Tbrenodia Augustalis*; and soon after the accession of King James, when the design of reconciling the nation to the church of Rome became apparent, and the religion of the court gave the only efficacious title to its favours, Dryden declared himself a convert to popery.

Dr. Johnson’s apology for the apostacy of Dryden, affords strong proofs of his argumentative powers; as well as some
cause

cause for doubts respecting the bias of his own mind as to religious tenets and opinions. It is as follows.

“ This at any other time might have passed with little censure. *Sir Kenelm Digby* embraced popery; the two *Rainolds* reciprocally converted one another; and *Chillingworth* himself was, a while, so entangled in the wiles of controversy, as to retire for quiet to an infallible church. If men of argument and study can find such difficulties, or such motives, as may either unite them to the church of Rome, or detain them in uncertainty, there can be no wonder that a man, who perhaps never inquired why he was a protestant, should, by an artful and experienced disputant, be made papist, overborne by the sudden violence of new and unexpected arguments, or deceived by a representation which shews only the doubts on one part, and only the evidence on the other.

“ That conversion will always be suspected, which apparently concurs with interest. He that never finds his error till it hinders his progress towards wealth or honour, will not be thought to love truth only for herself. Yet it may easily happen that information may come at a commodious time; and as truth and interest are not by any fatal necessity at variance, that one may by accident introduce the other. When opinions are struggling into popularity, the arguments by which they are opposed or defended become more known; and he that changes his profession would perhaps have changed it before, with the like opportunities of instruction. This was then the state of popery; every argument was used to shew it in its fairest form, and it must be owned to be a religion of external appearance sufficiently attractive.

“ It is natural to hope a comprehensive is likewise an elevated soul, and that whoever is wise, is also honest. I am willing to believe that Dryden, having employed his mind, active as it was, upon different studies, and filled it, capacious as it was, with other materials, came unprovided to the controversy, and wanted rather skill to discover the right, than virtue to maintain it. But inquiries into the heart are not for man; we must now leave him to his judge.”

The papal party having strengthened their cause by so powerful an adherent; they engaged him to write a defence of the papers found in the strong box of Charles the second, in opposition to Dr. Stillingfleet's “ Answer to some papers lately printed.” With the same view of promoting popery, he was supposed to have been engaged to translate the life of

Francis

Francis Xavier, but it does not appear that he ever acknowledged himself to be the translator. He was likewise suspected to have undertaken to write a version of *Varilla's History of Heresies*, and when Bishop Burnet published remarks upon it, to have written an answer, upon which the Bishop makes the following observation.

“ I have been informed, that a gentleman who is famous both for poetry and several other things, had spent three months in translating M. Varilla's History; but that as soon as my reflections appeared, he discontinued his labour, finding the credit of his author was gone. Now, if he thinks it is recovered by his answer, he will perhaps go on with his translation; and this may be, for aught I know, as good an entertainment for him as the conversation he had set on between the hinds and panthers, and all the rest of animals, for whom M. Varilla may serve well enough as an author; and this history and that poem are such extraordinary things of their kind, that it will be but suitable to see the author of the worst poem become likewise the translator of the worst history that the age has produced. If his grace and wit improve both proportionably, he will hardly find that he has gained much by the change he has made, from having no religion to chuse one of the worst. It is true, he had somewhat to sink from in matter of wit; but as for his morals, it is scarcely possible for him to grow a worse man than he was. He has lately wreaked his malice on me for spoiling his three months labour; but in it he has done me all the honour that any man can receive from him, which is to be railed at by him. If I had ill-nature enough to prompt me to wish a very bad wish for him, it should be, that he should go on and finish his translation. By that it will appear whether the English nation, which is the most competent judge in this matter, has, upon the seeing our debate, pronounced in M. Varillas' favour or in mine. It is true, Mr. D. will suffer a little by it, but at least it will serve to keep him in from other extravagancies; and if he gains little honour by this work, yet he cannot lose so much by it as he has done by his last employment.”

Dryden, having probably found out his own inferiority in theological controversy, was desirous of trying whether, by bringing poetry to aid his arguments, he might become a more efficacious defender of his new profession; and as reasoning in verse was one of his powers, and he was actuated by a zeal for the church of Rome, as well as the hope of fame, he published, in 1687, the *Hind and Panther*, a poem, in which the church of Rome, figured by the milk-
robite

white Hind, defends her tenets against the church of England, represented by the *Panther*, a beast beautiful, but spotted.

A fable which exhibits two beasts talking theology, appears at once highly absurd; and it was successfully ridiculed in the *City Mouse* and *Country Mouse*, a parody written by Montague, afterwards Earl of Halifax, and Prior, who then gave the first specimen of his abilities.

About the same time, three dialogues were published by the facetious Tom Brown, of which the two first were called, "Reason for Mr. Bayes's changing his religion;" and the third, "The Reasons for Mr. Hains the player's conversion and re-conversion."

Dr. Johnson relates, that Brown was a man not deficient in literature, nor destitute of fancy; but he seems to have thought it the pinnacle of excellence to be a *merry fellow*, and therefore laid out his powers upon small jests, or gross buffoonery, so that his performances have little intrinsic value; and were read only while they were recommended by the novelty of the event that occasioned them. These dialogues are like his other works: what sense or knowledge they contain is disgraced by the garb in which it is exhibited.

In 1688, Dryden published his *Britannia Rediviva*, a poem to celebrate the birth of the prince, filled with predictions of greatness and prosperity; predictions which were never verified.

At the Revolution, Dryden, having disqualified himself from holding any place under the government, by turning papist, was dismissed from the office of poet-laureat, which he had enjoyed with so much pride and praise, and which, to his great mortification, was transferred to Shadwell, an old enemy, whose inauguration he celebrated in a poem exquisitely satirical, called *Mac Flecknoe*; of which the *Dunciad*, as Pope himself declares, is an imitation, though more extended in its plan, and more diversified in its incidents. It is related by Prior, that Lord Dorset, when, as chamberlain, he was constrained to remove Dryden from his office, gave him from his own purse an allowance equal to the salary.

Being no longer the court poet, and having waited about two years, either considering himself as discountenanced by the public, or perhaps expecting a revolution, he resumed, for support, his former employment of writing for the stage, and produced, in 1690, *Don Sebastian*, a tragedy; and in the next four years, four more dramatic pieces, of which mention has already been made.

In 1693 appeared a new version of Juvenal and Persius.

Juvenal he translated the first, third, sixth, tenth, and fifteenth satires; and of Persius the whole work. On this occasion he introduced his two sons to the notice of the public, as (to use Dr. Johnson's phrase) nurselings to the muses. The fourteenth book of Juvenal was the work of John, and the seventh of Charles Dryden. He prefixed a very ample preface in the form of a dedication to Lord Dorset, in which he mentions the design he had once formed to write an epic poem, either of Arthur or the Black Prince. That this poem was never written is reasonably to be lamented. It would doubtless have improved our numbers, and enlarged our language, and might perhaps have contributed, by pleasing instruction, to rectify our opinions and purify our manners. What he required as the indispensable condition of such an undertaking, a public stipend, was not likely, in those times, to be obtained. He afterwards charged Sir Richard Blackmore with borrowing the plan of his *Arthur* from this preface, without acknowledging his benefactor.

In 1694, he began the most difficult and laborious of all his works, the translation of Virgil; but devoted two months of that year to a prose translation of Fresnoy's *Art of Painting*. The preface, which he boasts to have written in twelve mornings, exhibits a most striking parallel between poetry and painting. In 1697 he published his excellent version of the works of Virgil, which he completed in three years. "The wretched remainder," he says, in his dedication to Lord Clifford, "of a sickly age, worn out with study, and oppressed by fortune, without other support than the constancy and patience of a Christian. This translation was censured by Milborne, a clergyman, styled by Pope *the fairest of critics*; because, as Dr. Johnson remarks, "he exhibited his own version to be compared with that which he condemned.

His last work was his fables, published in 1699, in consequence, as is supposed, of a contract in the hands of Mr. Tonson, the bookseller, by which he bound himself, in consideration of three hundred pounds, to finish, for the press, ten thousand verses. In this volume is comprised the well known ode on St. Cecilia's day, which, as appears by a letter to Dr. Birch, he spent a fortnight in composing and correcting. Part of this book of fables is the first Iliad, in English, intended as a specimen of a version of the whole. Johnson pays a high compliment to Pope, in observing that "considering in what hands Homer was to fall, the reader cannot but rejoice that this project went no further."

The end of all the schemes and labours of this great poet was now at hand. Having been for some time, as he tells us, a cripple in his limbs, he died at his house in Gerrard Street, of a mortification in his leg, on the first of May 1701, in the 70th year of his age.

In a satirical poem, entitled "A description of Mr. Dryden's funeral," the writer asserts that the expence of the funeral was defrayed by Lord Halifax.

"He the great bard at his own charge interrs,"

but makes no mention of the regularity of the procession having been interrupted by the outrages of Lord Jeffries (son of the Lord Chancellor Jeffries) and his rakish companions, as related, at great length, in "Wilson's Life of Congreve." In the register of the College of Physicians is the following entry. "May 3, 1701. *Comitis Censoris Ordinariis.* At the request of several persons of quality, that Mr. Dryden might be carried from the College of Physicians to be interred at Westminster, it was unanimously granted by the president and censors." This entry is not calculated to afford any credit to the narrative concerning Lord Jeffries, but renders it probable that the expence of the funeral was defrayed by subscription.

Ward, in his *London Spy*, 1706, relates that on the occasion there was a performance of solemn music at the college, and, that at the procession, which he himself saw, there was a concert of hautboys and trumpets. The day of his interment, he says, was Monday the 13th of May, twelve days after his decease. Wilson says, that "Dr. Garth pronounced a fine Latin oration at the college over the corpse, which was attended to the Abbey by a numerous train of coaches. He was buried among the poets in Westminster Abbey, where he long lay without distinction, till Sheffield, Duke of Buckinghamshire, gave him a tablet, inscribed only with the name of DRYDEN.

He married the Lady Elizabeth Howard, daughter of the Earl of Berkshire, by whom he had three sons, Charles, John, and Henry. Charles was usher of the palace to Pope Clement the XIth, and visiting England in 1704, was drowned in an attempt to swim across the Thames at Windsor. He translated the seventh satire of Juvenal. John was author of a comedy called *The Husband his own Cuckold*; and translated the fourteenth satire of Juvenal. He is said to have died at Rome. Henry entered into some religious order. Dr. Johnson remarks that it is some proof of Dryden's sincerity in his second religion, that he taught it to his sons. A man, conscious of hypocritical profession in himself, is not likely to convert others; and as his sons were

were qualified in 1693 to appear among the translators of Juvenal, they must have been taught some religion before their father's change.

A complete collection of all the poetical works of Dryden, in six volumes octavo, was printed in 1766. The subsequent editions of his plays, poems, and translations, require no particular enumeration.

Of the person, private life, and domestic manners of Dryden, very few particulars are known. His picture, by Kneller, would lead us to suppose that he was graceful in his person, but Kneller is said to have been a great mender of nature. From the state poems we learn that he was a short thick man. The nick-name given him by his enemies was *Poet Squabb*.

Of his mind, the portrait which has been left by Congreve, who knew him with great familiarity, is such as adds our love of his manners to our admiration of his genius. "He was," we are told, "of a nature exceedingly humane and compassionate, ready to forgive injuries, and capable of a sincere reconciliation with those that had offended him. His friendship, where he professed it, went beyond his professions. He was of a very easy, of a very pleasing access, but somewhat slow, and, as it were, diffident in his advances to others; he had that in his nature which abhorred intrusion into any society whatever. He was therefore less known, and consequently his character became more liable to misapprehensions and misrepresentations: he was very modest, and very easy to be discountenanced in his approaches to his equals or superiors. As his reading had been very extensive, so he was very happy in a memory tenacious of every thing that he had read. He was not more possessed of knowledge than he was communicative of it; but then his communication was by no means pedantic, or imposed upon the conversation, but just such, and went so far, as by the natural turn of the conversation in which he was engaged, it was necessarily promoted or required. He was extremely ready and gentle in the correction of the errors of any writer who thought fit to consult him, and full as ready and patient to admit of the reprehension of others, in respect of his own oversights, or mistakes."

Since Congreve, who knew him well, has told us no more, the rest must be collected from other testimonies, and particularly from those notices which he has very liberally given of himself. In a letter to Dennis, written in 1694, he has these words. "For my principles of religion, I will not justify them to you; I know yours are so far different. For the same reason, I shall say nothing of my principles of
state;

state; I believe, you, in yours, follow the dictates of your reason; as I, in mine, do those of my conscience; if I thought myself in an error, I would retract it; for my morals, between man and man, I am not to be my own judge. I appeal to the world, if I have deceived or defrauded any man; and for my private conversation, they who see me every day, can be the best witnesses, whether or not it be blameless and inoffensive."

Congreve represents Dryden as ready to advise and instruct; but, there is reason to believe that his communication was rather useful than entertaining. He declares of himself that "his conversation was slow and dull, his humour saturnine and reserved; and that he was none of those who endeavour to break jests in company, and make repartees. One of his censurers makes him say,

"Nor wine, nor love, could ever see me gay;
"To writing bred, I knew not what to say."

On this trait of Dryden's character, Dr. Johnson has the following remarks:

"Of Dryden's sluggishness in conversation, it is vain to search or to guess the cause; he certainly wanted neither sentiments nor language; his intellectual treasures were great, though they were locked up from his own use. His thoughts, when he wrote, flowed in upon him so fast, that his only care was which to chuse, and which to reject; such rapidity of composition naturally promises a flow of talk; yet, we must be content to believe what an enemy says of him, when he likewise says it of himself; but whatever was his character as a companion, it appears that he lived in familiarity with the highest persons of his time. He has been reproached with boasting his familiarity with the great; and Horace will support him in the opinion, that to please superiors, is not the lowest kind of merit."

His works, it must be admitted, afford too many examples of dissolute licentiousness, and abject adulation. Such degradation of genius, such abuse of superlative abilities, cannot be contemplated but with grief and indignation.

-----"Indignant view,
"Yet pity Dryden---hark! whene'er he sings;
"How Adulation drops her courtly dew,
"On titled rhymers, and inglorious kings." MASON.

Dr. Johnson descants on this disposition of Dryden with singular point and energy. "Of dramatic immorality he did not want examples among his predecessors, or companions among his contemporaries; but, in the meanness and fervility of hyperbolical adulation, I know not, whether, since the days in which the Roman Emperors were deified,

he has even been equalled, except by Afra Behn, in an address to Eleanor Gwyn. When once he has undertaken the task of praise, he no longer retains shame in himself, nor supposes it in his patron. As many odoriferous bodies are observed to diffuse perfumes from year to year, without sensible diminution of bulk or weight; he appears never to have impoverished his mint of flattery by his expences, however lavish. He had all the forms of excellence, intellectual and moral, combined in his mind, with endless variations; and, when he had scattered on the hero of the day, the golden shower of wit and virtue, he had ready for him, whom he wished to cant on the morrow, new wit and virtue with another stamp. Of this kind of meanness he never seems to decline the practice, or lament the necessity; he considered the great as entitled to encomiastic homage, and brings praise rather as a tribute than a gift: more delighted with the fertility of his invention, than mortified by the prostitution of his judgment. It is, indeed, not certain, that on these occasions his judgment much rebelled against his interest. There are minds which easily sink into submission, that look on grandeur with undistinguishing reverence, and discover no defect, where there is elevation of rank and riches.

“With the praises of others, and of himself,” continues the doctor, “is always intermingled a strain of discontent and lamentation, a sullen growl of resentment, or a querulous murmur of distress. His works are undervalued, his merit is unrewarded, and ‘he has few thanks to pay his stars for being born an Englishman.’ To his critics he is sometimes contemptuous, sometimes resentful, and sometimes submissive. He degrades his own dignity by shewing that he was affected by their censures, and giving lasting importance to names, which, left to themselves, would vanish from remembrance. From this principle Dryden did not often depart; his complaints are for the greater part general; he seldom pollutes his page with an adverse name. He condescended, indeed, to a controversy with Settle, in which, perhaps, he may be considered rather as assaulting than repelling; and since Settle has sunk into oblivion, his libel remains injurious only to himself. Among answers to critics, no poetical attacks or altercations are to be included; they are like other poems, effusions of genius, produced as much to obtain praise, as to obviate censure. These Dryden practised, and in these he excelled.

“The persecution of critics was not the worst of his vexations; he was much more disturbed by the importunities

nities of want. His complaints of poverty are so frequently resented either with the dejection of weakness, sinking in helpless misery, or the indignation of merit claiming its tribute from mankind, that it is impossible not to detest the age which could impose on such a man the necessity of such solicitations, or not to despise the man who could submit to such solicitations, without necessity. Whether, by the world's neglect, or his own imprudence, it seems the greatest part of his life was passed in exigence. Of his supplies or his expences, no probable estimate can now be made. Except the salary of the laureat, to which King James the Second added the office of historiographer; his whole revenue seems to have been casual. The profit of his plays was not great; and very little intelligence can be had of the produce of his other works.

“ The inevitable consequence of poverty is despondence. Dryden had, probably, no recourse in his exigencies but to his bookseller. The particular character of Tonson I do not know; but the general conduct of traders was much less liberal in those times than in our own; their views were narrower, and their manners grosser. To the mercantile ruggedness of that race, the delicacy of the poet was sometimes exposed. Lord Bolingbroke, who, in his youth, had cultivated poetry, related to Dr. King of Oxford, that one day, when he visited Dryden, they heard, as they were conversing, another person entering the house. ‘ This,’ said Dryden, ‘ is Tonson; you will take care not to depart before he goes away, for I have not completed the sheet I promised him, and if you leave me unprotected, I must suffer all the rudeness to which his resentment can prompt his tongue.’

What rewards he obtained for his poems, besides the payment of the bookseller, cannot be known. Mr. Derrick, who consulted some of his relations, was informed, that his fables obtained five hundred pounds from the Dukes of Ormond; and he quotes Moyle, as relating that forty pounds were paid, by a musical society, for the use of *Alexander's Feast*.

Of his familiar habits and simple amusements, tradition has retained but little. Dr. Johnson found two men to whom Dryden was personally known, one of whom said, that at the house which he frequented, called Will's coffee-house, the appeal upon any literary dispute was made to him; and the other related, that his arm chair, which, in the winter, had a settled and prescriptive place by the fire, was, in the summer, placed in the balcony. The two places he called his winter and his summer seat.

One of his opinions, though prevalent in his time, will do him no honour in the present age. He put great confidence in the prognostications of judicial astrology. In the Appendix to the Life of Congreve, is a narrative of some of his predictions wonderfully fulfilled. In the preface to his fables, he has endeavoured, obliquely, to justify his superstition, by attributing the same to some of the ancients; but it is the property of humanity to err: and whatever failings may be imputed to Dryden, we may, in the language of Dr. Johnson, pronounce him a man, “whom every English generation must mention with reverence, as a critic and a poet.”

The character of Dryden, in the capacities for which he is so highly commended by the distinguished biographer, from whom we have taken the principal incidents of his life, is most happily illustrated by the classic pen of that eminent writer.

“Dryden,” says Dr. Johnson, “may be properly considered as the father of English criticism, as the writer who first taught us to determine, upon principles, the merit of composition. Of our former poets, the greatest dramatist wrote without rules, conducted through life and nature by a genius that rarely misled, and rarely deserted him. Of the rest, those who knew the laws of propriety had neglected to teach them. Dryden’s *Essay on Dramatic Poetry* was the first regular treatise on the art of writing;—it will not be easy to find, in all the opulence of our language, a treatise so artfully variegated with successive representations of opposite probabilities, so enlivened with imagery, so brightened with illustrations. His portraits of the English dramatists are wrought with great spirit and diligence. The account of Shakespeare may stand as a perpetual model of encomiastic criticism; exact without minuteness, and lofty without exaggeration. The praise lavished by Longinus on the attestation of the heroes of Maidthin, by Demosthenes, fades away before it. In a few lines is exhibited a character so extensive in its comprehension, and so various in its limitations, that nothing can be added, diminished, or reformed; nor can the editors and admirers of Shakespeare, in all their emulation of reverence, boast of much more than of having diffused and paraphrased this epitome of excellence, of changing Dryden’s gold for baser metal, of lower value though of greater bulk. In this, and in all his other essays on the same subject, the criticism of Dryden is the criticism of a poet; not a dull collection of theorems, not a rude detection of faults, which, perhaps, the censor was not able to have committed; but a gay
and

and vigorous dissertation, where delight is mingled with instruction, and where the author proves his right of judgment, by his power of performance.

“As he had studied, with great diligence, the art of poetry, and enlarged or rectified his notions, by experience perpetually increasing, he had his mind stored with principles and observations, he poured out his knowledge with great liberality, and seldom published any work without a critical dissertation, by which he increased the book and the price, with little labour to himself; for, of labour, notwithstanding the multiplicity of his productions, there is sufficient reason to suspect that he was not a lover. To write *con amore*, with fondness for the employment, with perpetual touches and retouches, with unwillingness to take leave of his own ideas, and an unwearied pursuit of unattainable perfection, was, I think, no part of his character.

“His criticism may be considered as general or occasional. In his general precepts, which depend upon the nature of things, and the structure of the human mind, he may doubtless be safely recommended to the confidence of the reader; but his occasional and particular positions were sometimes interested, sometimes negligent, and sometimes capricious.

“When he has any objection to obviate, or any licence to defend, he is not very scrupulous about what he asserts, nor very cautious, if the present purpose be served, not to entangle himself in his own sophistries. But when all arts are exhausted, like other hunted animals, he sometimes stands at bay: as he cannot disown the grossness of one of his plays, he declares that he knows not any law that prescribes morality to a comic poet.

“It will be difficult to prove that Dryden ever made any great advances in literature. Having distinguished himself at Westminster, under the tuition of Busby, who advanced his scholars to a height of knowledge very rarely attained in grammar schools, it is not to be supposed that his skill in the ancient languages was deficient, compared with that of common studies; but his scholastic acquisitions seem not proportionate to his opportunities and abilities; he could not, like Milton and Cowley, have made his name illustrious by his learning; yet, it cannot be said that his genius is very unprovided of matter, or that his fancy languishes in penury of ideas. His works abound with knowledge, and sparkle with illustrations; there is scarce any science or faculty that does not supply him with occasional images and lucky similitudes; every

page discovers a mind very widely acquainted both with art and nature, and in full possession of great stores of intellectual wealth.

“ Of him that knows much, it is natural to suppose, that he has read with diligence; yet, I rather suppose that the knowledge of Dryden was gleaned from accidental intelligence, and various conversation, by a quick apprehension, a judicious selection, and a happy memory; a keen appetite of knowledge, and as powerful digestion; by a vigilance that permitted nothing to pass without notice, and an habit of reflection that suffered nothing useful to be lost. A mind like Dryden's, always curious, always active, to which every understanding was proud to be associated, and of which every one solicited the regard, by an ambitious display of himself, had a more pleasant, perhaps a nearer way to knowledge than by the silent progress of solitary reading. I do not suppose that he despised books, or intentionally neglected them; but that he was carried out by the impetuosity of his genius to more vivid and speedy instructors; and that his studies were rather desultory and fortuitous, than constant and systematical. It must, however, be confessed, that he scarcely ever appears to want book learning, but when he mentions books; and to him may be transferred the praise which he gives his master Charles.

“ His conversation, wit, and parts,
 “ His knowledge in the noblest useful arts,
 “ Were such dead authors could not give;
 “ But habitudes of those that live,
 “ Who, lighting him, did greater lights receive.
 “ He drained from all, and all they knew,
 “ His apprehension quick, his judgment true:
 “ That the most learn'd, with shame confess
 “ His knowledge more, his reading only less.”

“ Criticism, either didactic or defensive, occupies almost all his prose, except those pages which he has devoted to his patrons; but none of his prefaces were ever thought tedious; they have not the formality of a settled style, in which the first half of the sentence betrays the other;—the clauses are never balanced, nor the periods modelled: every word seems to drop by chance, though it falls into its proper place; nothing is cold or languid; the whole is airy, animated and vigorous: what is little, is gay: what is great, is splendid. He may be thought to mention himself too frequently; but, while he forces himself upon our esteem, we cannot refuse him to stand high in his own; every thing is excused by the play of images and sprightliness of expression. Though all is easy, nothing is feeble; though all seems careless, there is nothing harsh;—and though more than a century has passed since the publication

tion of his earlier works, they have nothing yet uncouth or obsolete.

“ He who writes much, will not easily escape a manner : such a recurrence of particular modes as may be easily noted. Dryden is always *another and the same* ; he does not exhibit a second time the same elegancies in the same form ; nor appears to have any other art than that of expressing, with clearness, what he thinks with vigour ; his style could not easily be imitated, either seriously or ludicrously ; for, being always agreeable, and always varied, it has no prominent, or discriminative characters. The beauty who is totally free from disproportion of parts and features, cannot be ridiculed by an overcharged resemblance. From his prose, however, Dryden derives only his accidental and secondary praise ; the veneration with which his name is pronounced by every cultivator of English literature, is paid to him as he refined the language, improved the sentiments, and tuned the numbers of English poetry.

“ Waller was smooth, but Dryden taught to join

“ The varying verse, the full resounding line,

“ The long majestic march, and energy divine.” POPE.

“ Before the time of Dryden, there was no poetical diction, no system of words at once refined from the grossness of domestic use, and free from the harshness of terms appropriated to particular arts. Words too familiar, or too remote, defeat the purpose of a poet ; those happy combinations of words which distinguish poetry from prose, had been rarely attempted ; we had few elegances or flowers of speech ; the roses had not yet been plucked from the brambles, or different colours had not been joined to enliven one another. The new versification, as it was called, may be considered as owing its establishment to Dryden ; from whose time it is apparent that English poetry had no tendency to relapse to its former savageness.

“ It seldom happens, that all the necessary causes concur to any great effect ; will is wanting to power, or power to will, or both are impeded by external obstructions. The exigencies in which Dryden was condemned to pass his life, are reasonably supposed to have blasted his genius, to have driven out his works in a state of immaturity, and to have intercepted the full-blown elegance which longer growth would have supplied. Poverty, like other rigid powers, is sometimes too hastily accused ; if the excellence of Dryden’s works was lessened by his indigence, their number was increased, and I know not how it will be proved that if he had written less he would have written better ; or that, indeed, he would have undergone
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the toil of an author, if he had not been solicited by something more pressing than the love of praise. We know that Dryden's several productions were so many successive expedients for his support; his plays were, therefore, often borrowed, and his poems were almost all occasional. Such compositions may, however, secure to a writer the praise both of learning and facility; for they cannot be the effect of long study, and must be furnished immediately from the treasures of the mind.

"The death of Cromwell was the first public event which called forth Dryden's poetical powers. His heroic stanzas have beauties and defects; the thoughts are vigorous, and though not always proper, shew a mind replete with ideas; the numbers are smooth: and the diction, if not altogether correct, is easy and elegant. He very early formed his versification: there are, in this early production, no traces of the ruggedness of preceding authors; but he did not so soon free his mind from the ambition of forced conceits. From his verses on the restoration, it appears, that he had not yet learned to forbear the improper use of mythology. In the verses to the Lord Chancellor, two years afterwards, he exhibits proof of a mind at once subtle and comprehensive; and seems, in the production of them, to have collected all his powers.

"In the *Annus Mirabilis*, he returned to the *quatrain* versification, which, from that time, he totally quitted, perhaps, from this experience of its inconvenience: this is one of his greatest attempts: he had subjects equal to his abilities—a great naval war, and the fire of London. Battles have always been described in heroic poetry; but a sea-fight and artillery had yet something of novelty. New arts are long in use before poets describe them; for they borrow every thing from their predecessors, and commonly derive very little from nature or from life. Boileau was the first French writer that had ever hazarded in verse, the mention of modern war, or the effect of gunpowder. We, who are less afraid of novelty, had already possession of those dreadful images; Waller had described a sea-fight: Milton had not transferred the invention of fire-arms to the rebellious angels.

"This poem is written with great diligence, yet does not fully answer the expectation raised by such subjects, and such a writer. With the stanza of Davenant, he has sometimes his vein of parenthesis, and incidental disquisition; and stops his narrative for a wise remark. The general fault is, that he affords more sentiment than description, and does not so much impress scenes upon the fancy, as deduce

deduce consequences, and make comparisons. The initial stanzas have rather too much resemblance to the first lines of Waller's poem on the war with Spain; perhaps such a beginning is natural, and could not be avoided without affectation. Both Waller and Dryden might take their hint from the poem on the civil war of Rome, *Orbem jam totum*, &c.

“ His description of the fire is painted by resolute meditation, out of a mind better formed to reason than to feel. The conflagration of a city, with all its tumults of concomitant distress, is one of the most dreadful spectacles which this world can afford to human eyes; yet, it seems to raise little emotion in the breast of the poet; he watches the flame coolly from street to street, with now a reflection, and now a simile; till, at last, he meets the king, for whom he makes a speech rather tedious in a time so busy, and then follows again the progress of the fire. His prediction of the improvements which should be made in the new city, is elegant and poetical; and with an event which poets cannot always boast, has been happily verified. The poem concludes with a simile that might have better been omitted; and Dryden, when he wrote this poem, seems not yet fully to have formed his versification, or settled his system of propriety.

“ *Absalom and Achitophel* is a work so well known, that particular criticism is superfluous. If it be considered as a poem political and controversial, it will be found to comprise all the excellencies of which the subject is susceptible; acrimony of censure, elegance of praise, artful delineation of characters, variety and vigour of sentiment, happy terms of language, and pleasing harmony of numbers; and all these raised to such a height, as can scarcely be found in any other English composition; it is not, however, without faults: some lines are inelegant, or improper, and too many are irreverently licentious. The original structure of this poem was defective; allegories, drawn to great length, will always break; Charles could not run continually parallel with David. The subject had, likewise, another inconvenience: it admitted little imagery or description, and a long poem of mere sentiments easily becomes tedious; though all the parts are forcible, and every line kindles new raptures, the reader, if not relieved by the interposition of something that soothes the fancy, grows weary of admiration, and defers the rest. In the second part, written by Tate, there is a long insertion, which, for poignancy of satire, exceeds any part of the former. The

“ The *Medal*, written upon the same principles with *Absalom and Achitophel*, but upon a narrower plan, gives less pleasure, though it discovers equal abilities in the writer. The superstructure cannot extend beyond the foundation ; a single character, or incident, cannot furnish as many ideas, as a series of events, or multiplicity of agents. His poem, therefore, since time has left it to itself, is not so much read, nor, perhaps, generally understood ; yet, it abounds with touches both of humorous and serious satire.

“ The *Threnodia*, which, by a turn, I am afraid, neither authorised nor analogical, he calls *Augustalis*, is not among his happiest productions ; its first and obvious defect is the irregularity of its metre : to which the ears of that age, however, were accustomed. What is worse, it has neither tenderness, nor dignity : it is neither magnificent, nor pathetic. There is, throughout the composition, a desire of splendour without wealth. In the conclusion, he seems too much pleased with the prospect of the new reign, to have lamented his old master with much sincerity.

“ His poem, on the death of *Mrs. Killigrew*, is undoubtedly the noblest ode that our language has ever produced ; the first part flows with a torrent of enthusiasm : all the stanzas, indeed, are not equal : an imperial crown cannot be one continued diamond : the gems must be held together by some less valuable matter.

“ In his first ode for St. Cecilia’s day, which is lost in the splendour of the second, there are passages which would have dignified any other poet. The first stanza is vigorous and elegant ; the conclusion is likewise striking, but it includes an image so awful in itself, that it can owe little to poetry.

“ Of his skill in elegy, he has given a specimen in his *Eleonora*. This piece is not without its faults ; there is so much likeness in the initial comparison, that there is no illustration. As a king would be lamented, Eleonora was lamented. Dryden confesses that he did not know the lady whom he celebrates ; the praise being, therefore, inevitably general, fixes no impression upon the reader, nor excites any tendency to love, nor much desire of imitation. Knowledge of the subject, is, to the poet, what materials are to the architect.

“ The *Religio Laici*, which borrows its title from the *Religio Medici* of Browne, is almost the only work of Dryden which can be considered as a voluntary effusion ; in this, therefore, it might be hoped that the full effulgence of his genius would be found ; but, unhappily, the subject is rather

ther argumentative than poetical: he intended only a specimen of metrical disputation.

“ And this unpolish’d rugged verse I chose,
“ As fittest for discourse, and nearest prose.”

“ This, however, is a composition of great excellence in its kind: in which the familiar is very properly diversified with the solemn, and the grave with the humourous; in which metre has neither weakened the force, nor clouded the perspicuity of argument; nor will it be easy to find another example equally happy, of this middle kind of writing, which, though prosaic in some parts, rises to high poetry in others, and neither towers to the skies, nor creeps along the ground.

“ The *Hind and the Panther*, the longest of all Dryden’s original poems, is an allegory intended to comprize, and to decide the controversy between the Romanists and Protestants. The scheme of this work is injudicious and incommodious; for what can be more absurd, than that one beast should counsel another to rest her faith upon a pope and council? The *Hind*, at one time, is afraid to drink at the common brook, because she may be worried; but, walking home with the *Panther*, talks by the way of the *Nicene Fathers*; and at last declares herself to be of the Catholic Church.

“ This absurdity was very properly ridiculed in the *City Mouse* and the *Country Mouse*, written by *Montague* and *Prior*; and in the detection and censure of the incongruity and fiction, chiefly consists the value of their performance; which, whatever reputation it might obtain by the help of temporary passions, seems to readers, almost a century distant, not very forcible or animated.

“ Pope, whose judgment was, perhaps, a little bribed by the subject, used to mention this poem as the most correct specimen of Dryden’s versification; it was, indeed, written when he had completely formed his manner, and may be supposed to exhibit, negligence excepted, his deliberate and ultimate scheme of metre.

“ But when the constitutional absurdity of this poem is overlooked, it must be confessed to be written with great smoothness of metre: a wide extent of knowledge: and an abundant multiplicity of images; the controversy is embellished with pointed sentences, diversified by illustrations, and enlivened by volleys of invective. As it was, by its nature, a work of defiance, a composition which would naturally be examined with the utmost acrimony of criticism, it was probably laboured with uncommon attention; and there

there are, indeed, few negligencies in the subordinate parts. The original impropriety, and the subsequent unpopularity of the subject, added to the ridiculousness of its first elements, has sunk it into neglect; but it may be usefully studied as an example of poetical ratiocination, in which the argument suffers little from the metre.

“ In the poem, on the *Birth of the Prince of Wales*, nothing is very remarkable but the exorbitant adulation, and the insensibility of the precipice on which the king was then standing, which the laureat apparently shared with the rest of the courtiers. A few months cured him of controversy, dismissed him from court, and made him again a playwright and a translator.

“ A new version of Juvenal having been proposed to the poets of that time, and undertaken by them in conjunction, the main design was conducted by Dryden, whose reputation was such, that no man was unwilling to serve the muses under him. The general character of this translation will be given when it is said to preserve the wit, but to want the dignity of the original. The peculiarity of Juvenal is a mixture of gaiety and stateliness: of pointed sentences, and declamatory grandeur. His points have not been neglected, but his grandeur none of the band seemed to consider as necessary to be imitated except Creech, who undertook the thirteenth satire. It is therefore, perhaps, possible to give a better representation of that great satirist, even in those parts which Dryden himself has translated, some passages excepted, which will never be excelled.

“ With Juvenal was published Persius, translated wholly by Dryden. This work, though, like all the other productions of Dryden, it may have shining parts, seems to have been written merely for wages, in an uniform mediocrity, without an eager endeavour after excellence, or laborious effort of the mind.

“ Not long afterwards he undertook perhaps the most arduous work of its kind, a translation of Virgil. In the comparison of Homer and the Mantuan bard, the discriminative excellence of the former's elevation and comprehension of thought; of the latter, grace and splendour of diction. The beauties of Homer are therefore difficult to be lost, and those of Virgil difficult to be retained. The massy trunk of sentiment is safe by its solidity, but the blossoms of elocution easily drop away. The author having the choice of his own images, selects those which he can best adorn; the translator must, at all hazards, follow his original, and express thoughts which perhaps he would not have chosen. When to this primary difficulty is added the inconvenience of a language
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so much inferior in harmony to the Latin, it cannot be expected that they who could read the *Georgiæ* and the *Æneid* should be much delighted with any version.

“All these obstacles Dryden saw, and all these he determined to encounter. The expectation of his work was undoubtedly great; the nation considered its honour as interested in the event. One gave him the different additions of his author, and another helped him in the subordinate parts. The arguments of the several books were given him by Addison; the hopes of the public were not disappointed. “He produced,” says Pope, “the most noble and spirited translation that I know in any language.” It certainly excelled whatever had appeared in English, and appeared to have satisfied his friends, and, for the most part, to have silenced his enemies. Milbourne, a clergyman, indeed, attacked it; but his outrages seem to be the ebullitions of a mind agitated by stronger resentment than bad poetry can excite, and previously resolved not to be pleased.

“Since the English ear has been accustomed to the melliflence of Pope’s numbers, and the diction of poetry has become more splendid, new attempts have been made to translate Virgil; and all his works have been attempted by men better qualified to contend with Dryden. It is not by comparing line with line that the merit of great works is to be estimated; but by their general effects and ultimate result. Works of imagination excel by their allurements and delight; by their power of attracting and detaining the attention. That book is good in vain, which the reader throws away. He only is the master who keeps the mind in pleasing captivity; whose pages are perused with eagerness, and in hopes of new pleasure are perused again, and whose conclusion is perceived with an eye of sorrow, such as the traveller casts upon departing day. By his proportion of this predominance, I will consent that Dryden should be tried; of this, which in opposition to reason, makes Ariosto the darling and the pride of Italy; of this, which, in defiance of criticism, continues Shakspeare the sovereign of the drama.

“In his fables, Dryden gave us the first example of a mode of writing which the Italians call *refaccimento*, a renovation of ancient writers, by modernizing their language. The works of Chaucer, upon which this kind of rejuvenescence has been bestowed by Dryden, requires little criticism. The tale of the cock seems hardly worth revival; and the story of Palamon and Arcite, containing an action unsuitable to the times in which it is placed, can hardly be suffered to pass without censure of the hyperbolical com-

mendation which Dryden has given in the general preface, and in a poetical dedication, a piece where his original fondness of remote conceits seems to have revived.

“ Of the three pieces borrowed from Boccace, *Sigismunda* may be defended by the celebrity of the story. *Theodore and Honoria*, though it contains not much moral, yet afforded opportunities of striking description; and *Cymon* was formerly a tale of such reputation, that at the revival of letters it was translated into Latin by one of the *Beroalds*.

“ Whatever subjects employed the pen of Dryden, he was still improving our measures and embellishing our language. In his edition are interspersed some short original poems, which, with his prologues, epilogues, and songs, may be comprised in Congreve’s remark, that even those, if he had written nothing else, would have entitled him to the praise of excellence in his kind.

“ One composition, however, must be distinguished. The Ode for *St. Cecilia’s* day, called *Alexander’s Feast*, perhaps the last effort of his poetry, has been always considered as exhibiting the highest flight of fancy, and the exactest nicety of art. This is allowed to stand without a rival. If, indeed, there is any excellence beyond it, in some other of Dryden’s works that excellence must be found. Compared with the Ode on *Killigrew*, it may be pronounced, perhaps, superior in the whole; but without any single part, equal to the first stanza of the other. It is said to have cost Dryden a fortnight’s labour; but it does not want its negligences: some of the lines are without correspondent rhymes; a defect which I never detected but after an acquaintance of many years, and which the enthusiasm of the writer might hinder him from perceiving.

“ In a general survey of Dryden’s labours, he appears to have had a mind very comprehensive by nature, and much enriched with acquired knowledge. His compositions are the effect of a vigorous genius operating upon large materials. The power that predominated in his intellectual operations was rather strong reason than quick sensibility. Upon all occasions that were presented, he studied rather than felt, and produced sentiments, not such as nature enforces, but meditation supplies. With the simple and elemental passions, as they spring separate in the mind, he seems not much acquainted; and seldom describes them but as they are complicated by the various relations of society, and confused in the tumults and agitations of life. What he says of love may contribute to the explanation of his character.

Love various minds does variously inspire;
 It stirs in gentle bosoms gentle fire,
 Like that of incense on the altar laid;
 But raging flames tempestuous souls invade;
 A fire which every windy passion blows,
 With pride it mounts, or with revenge it glows.

“ Dryden’s was not one of the gentle bosoms: Love, as it subsists in itself, with no tendency but to the person loved, and wishing only for correspondent kindness; such love as shuts out all other interest; the love of the golden age, was too soft and subtle to put his faculties in motion. He hardly conceived it but in its turbulent effervescence with some other desires; when it was inflamed by rivalry, or obstructed by difficulties; when it invigorated ambition, or exasperated revenge. He is therefore, with all his variety of excellence, not often pathetic; and had so little sensibility of the power of effusions purely natural, that he did not esteem them in others. Simplicity gave him no pleasure, and for the first part of his life he looked on Otway with contempt, though at last, indeed very late, he confessed that in his plays there was nature, which is the chief beauty.

“ The favourite exercise of his mind was ratiocination; and that that argument might not be too soon at an end, he delighted to talk of liberty and necessity, destiny and contingency; these he discusses in the language of the schools with so much profundity, that the terms which he uses are seldom understood. It is, indeed, learning, but learning out of place. When once he had engaged himself in disputation, thoughts flowed in on either side: he was now no longer at a loss; he had always argument at command; give him matter for his verse, and he finds, without difficulty, verse for his matter.

“ In comedy, for which he professes himself not naturally qualified, the mirth which he excites will not be found so much to arise from any original humour, or peculiarity of character, nicely distinguished and diligently pursued, as from incidents and circumstances, artifices and surprises; from jests of action rather than of sentiment. What he had of humorous or passionate, he seems to have had not from nature, but from other poets; if not always as a plagiarist, at best as an imitator. Next to argument, his delight was in wild and daring sallies of sentiment, in the irregular and eccentric violence of wit. He delighted to tread upon the brink of meaning, where light and darkness begin to mingle; to approach the precipice of absurdity, and hover over the abyss of unideal vacancy.

“ He had a vanity unworthy of his abilities; to shew, as may be suspected, the rank of the company with whom he lived,

lived, by the use of French words, which had then crept into conversation; such as *fraicheur* for *coolness*, *frague* for *turbulence*, and a few more, none of which the language has incorporated or retained. They continue only where they stood, for perpetual warnings to future innovators.*

“Dryden had not only faults of affectation, but faults of negligence. Such is the unevenness of his compositions, that ten lines are seldom found together, without something of which the reader is ashamed. He was no rigid judge of his own pages; he seldom struggled after supreme excellence, but snatched in haste what was within his reach, and when he could not content others, was content himself. He did not keep present to his mind an idea of pure perfection, nor compare his works, such as they were, with what they might be made. He knew to whom he should be opposed. He had more music than Waller, more vigour than Denham, and more nature than Cowley; and from his contemporaries he was in no danger. Standing therefore in the highest place, he had no care to rise by contending with himself, but, while there was no name above his own, was willing to enjoy fame on the easiest terms.

“He was no lover of labour. What he thought sufficient he did not stop to make better; and allowed himself to leave many parts unfinished, in confidence that the good lines would overbalance the bad. What he had once written he dismissed from his thoughts; and I believe there is no example to be found of any correction or improvement made by him after publication.

“Some improvements had been already made in English numbers; but the full force of our language was not yet felt: the verse that was smooth was commonly feeble. If Cowley had sometimes a finished line, he had it by chance. Dryden knew how to chuse the flowing and the sonorous words; to vary the pauses and adjust the accents; to diversify the cadence, and yet preserve the smoothness of his metres.

“Of Dryden’s works, it was said by Pope, “that he could select from them better specimens of every mode of poetry than any other English writer could supply.” Perhaps no nation ever produced a writer that enriched his language with such variety of models. To him we owe the improvement, perhaps the completion of our metre, the refinement of our language, and much of the correctness of our sentiments. By him we are taught *sapere & fari*, to think naturally and express forcibly. He taught us that it

* To this foible of Dryden, there is an evident allusion in the *Rehearsal*, where Bayes says he makes the two kings of Brentford talk French to shew their breeding.

was possible to reason in rhyme. He shewed us the true bounds of a translator's liberty. What was said of Rome adorned by Augustus, may be applied, by an easy metaphor, to English poetry embellished by Dryden; *Lateritiani invexit; marmoream reliquit*. He found it *brick*, he left it *marble*."

As a further proof of the poetical excellence of our author, we adduce the following testimonies.

Dr. Felton, adverting to his version of Virgil, hath these words. "Those who excel him, where they observe he hath failed, will fall below in a thousand instances where he hath excelled."

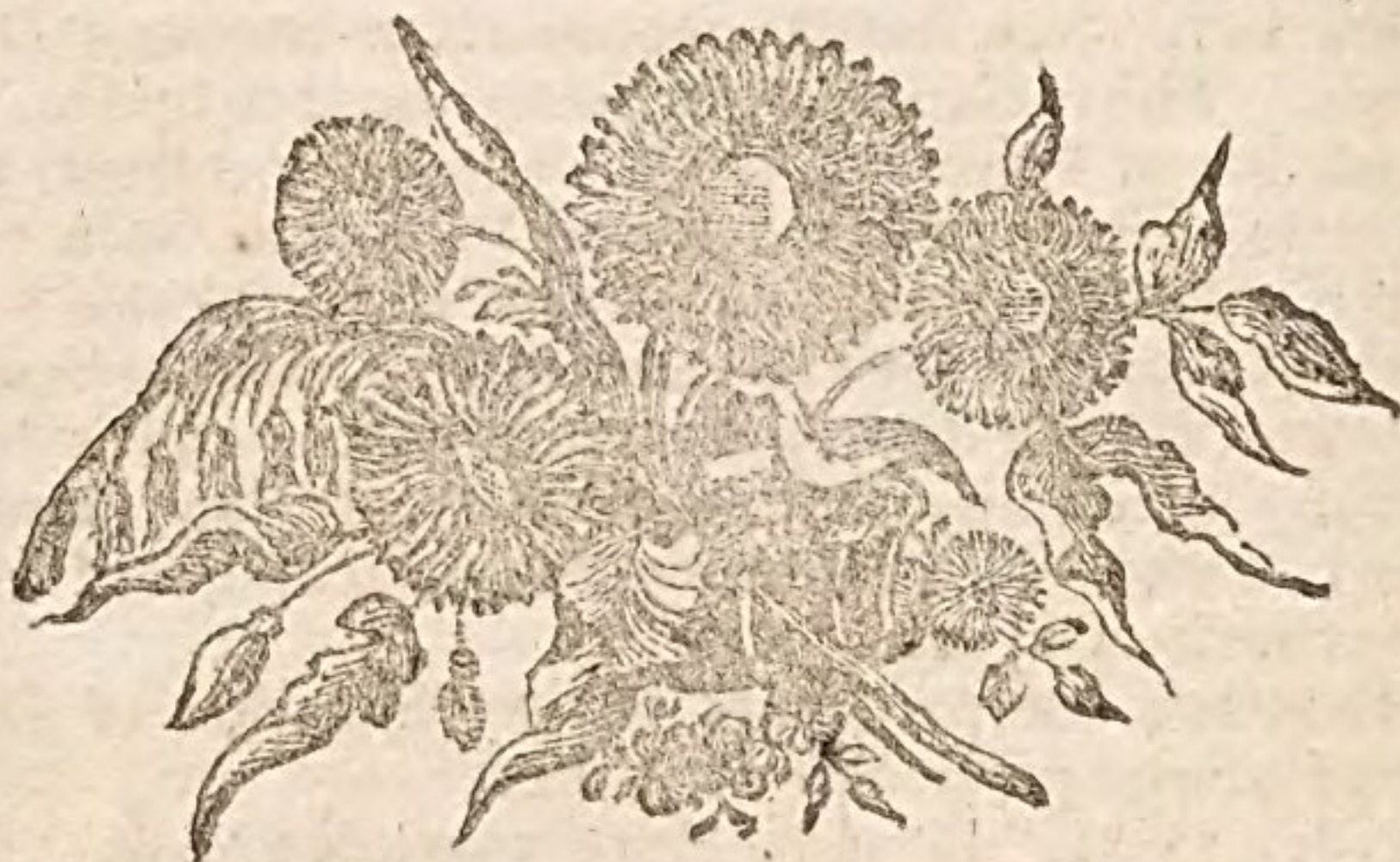
"It is to his fables," says Dr. Wharton, "though written in his old age, that Dryden will owe his immortality, and among them, particularly to *Palamon and Arcite*, *Sigismunda and Guiscardo*, and *Theodore and Honoria*. The warmth and melody of these pieces, have never been excelled in our language, I mean in rhyme."

Critics have often stated a comparison between Dryden and Pope. The subject has not been forgotten by Dr. Johnson in his life of Pope. A long controversy relative to the comparative merits of Dryden and Pope, has been carried on between Miss Seward and Mr. Weston in the "Gentleman's Magazine" for 1789 and 1790. Much ingenuity and critical skill are displayed on both sides. Miss Seward strenuously maintains the pretensions of Pope, and Mr. Weston contends with inextinguishable ardour in the cause of his favourite Dryden.

Dr. Beattie's comparison of the versification of Dryden and Pope merits particular attention.

"Dryden's verse" says that elegant writer "though faulty, has a grace and a spirit peculiar to itself. That of Pope is more correct, and perhaps, upon the whole, more harmonious; but it is in general more languid and less diversified. Pope's numbers are sweet, but elaborate; and our sense of their energy is in some degree interrupted by our attention to the art displayed in their contexture. Dryden's are more natural and free, and while they communicate their own sprightly motion to the spirits of the reader, hurry him on with a pleasing violence without giving him time either to animadvert on their faults, or to analyse their beauties. Pope excels in solemnity of sound; Dryden in an easy melody, and boundless variety of rhyme. In this last respect, I think I could prove that he is superior to all other English poets, Milton himself not excepted. Till Dryden appeared, none of our writers in rhyme, of the last century, approached in any measure, to the harmony of Spenser and

Fairfax. Of Waller it can only be said, that he is not harsh. Of Denham and Cowley, if a few couplets were struck out of their works, we could not say so much. But in Dryden's hands, the English rhyming couplets assumed a new form, and seems hardly to be susceptible of any farther improvement."



ADVERTISEMENT.

THE public is here obliged with the poetical works of Mr. Dryden, detached from the compositions of inferior writers, with which most of them have been hitherto blended in the *Miscellanies**. It was thought but justice to the productions of so excellent a poet, to set them free, at last, from so disadvantageous, if not unnatural, an union; which, like the cruelty of Mezentius, in Virgil, was no less than a junction of *living* and *dead* bodies. We say this in respect to numberless pieces in Mr. Dryden's *Miscellanies*, without derogating from that praise which is justly due to others among them. But, not to enter into the merit of Mr. Dryden's *fellow undertakers* † in that *collection*, or the motives which induced him to write in conjunction with others, we may venture to say it is now high time the *partnership* should be dissolved, and Mr. Dryden left to stand upon his own bottom. His credit, as a poet, is out of all danger, though the withdrawing his stock may probably expose many of his copartners to the hazard of a poetical bankruptcy.

There is, indeed, a collection of original poems and translations by Mr. Dryden, published for J. Tonson, in 1701, in a thin folio; and another by J. and R. Tonson, in two volumes, duodecimo, in 1733; but the first does not contain much above *half* the pieces, and the last is *not complete*, several of the prologues epilogues, songs, and epitaphs, being entirely omitted; so that neither the one nor the other did fully answer the design of the present collection, which is meant to include the *whole* of Mr. Dryden's *original poems*, upon which, as has been observed by one of his biographers (*Biograph. dict.* vol. IV. p. 228.) his poetical reputation is chiefly built.

* These published by Mr. Dryden himself in *Six Parts*, and others.

† So he himself calls them, preface to the *Miscellanies*.

In all the editions we have seen of Mr. Dryden's *original poems*, the second part of his *Absalom and Achithophel* has been printed imperfect, the lines wrote by Mr. Tate, upwards of 300 in number, being entirely omitted. In order to connect the reading and sense of the poem, thus interrupted, these lines we have restored, as well as the desultory prologues, epilogues, songs, &c. and, by the restoration, offer to the reader, in the present edition, not a mutilated, but a perfect poem; not a partial, but a complete collection of Mr. Dryden's *original poetical pieces*.



VERSES

IN PRAISE OF MR. DRYDEN.

ON MR. DRYDEN'S RELIGIO.

BY THE EARL OF ROSCOMMON.

BEGONE you slaves, you idle vermine go,
Fly from the scourges, and your master know;
Let free impartial men from Dryden learn
Mysterious secrets of a high concern,
And weighty truths, solid convincing sense, 5
Explain'd by unaffected eloquence.

What can you (Rev'rend Levi) here take ill?
Men still had faults, and men will have them still:
He that hath none, and lives as angels do,
Must be an angel; but what's that to you? 10

While mighty Louis finds the Pope too great,
And dreads the yoke of his imposing seat,
Our sects a more tyrannic pow'r assume,
And would for scorpions change the rods of Rome;
That church detain'd the legacy divine; 15
Fanatics cast the pearls of heav'n to swine:
What then have thinking honest men to do
But chuse a mean between th' usurping two?

Nor can the Egyptian patriarch blame thy muse,
Which for his firmness does his heat excuse; 20
Whatever councils have approv'd his creed,
The preface sure was his own act and deed.
Our church will have that preface read you'll say:
'Tis true: but so she will th' Apocrypha;
And such as can believe them freely may. 25

But did that God, (so little understood)
Whose darling attribute is being good,
From the dark womb of the rude chaos bring
Such various creatures, and make man their king,
Yet leave his favourite man, his chiefest care, 30
More wretched than the vilest insects are?

O! how much happier and more safe are they,
If helpless millions must be doom'd a prey

4 VERSES IN PRAISE OF MR. DRYDEN.

To yelling furies, and for ever burn
 In that sad place from whence is no return, 35
 For unbelief in one they never knew,
 Or for not doing what they could not do!
 The very fiends know for what crime they fell,
 And so do all their foll'wers that rebel:
 If then a blind well-meaning Indian stray, 40
 Shall the great gulph be shew'd him for the way?
 For better ends our kind Redeemer dy'd,
 Or the fall'n angels' rooms will be but ill supply'd.
 That Christ, who at the great deciding day
 (For he declares what he resolves to say) 45
 Will damn the goats for their ill-natur'd faults,
 And save the sheep for actions, not for thoughts,
 Hath too much mercy to send men to hell
 For humble charity and hoping well.
 To what stupidity are zealots grown, 50
 Whose inhumanity profusely shown
 In damning crowds of souls, may damn their own!
 I'll err at least on the securer side,
 A convert free from malice and from pride. 54

FROM MR. ADDISON'S ACCOUNT

OF THE

ENGLISH POETS.

BUT see where artful Dryden next appears,
 Grown old in rhyme, but charming ev'n in years!
 Great Dryden next, whose tuneful muse affords
 The sweetest numbers and the fittest words.
 Whether in comic sounds or tragic airs 5
 She forms her voice, she moves our smiles and tears,
 If satire or heroic strains she writes,
 Her hero pleases, and her satire bites.
 From her no harsh unartful numbers fall;
 She wears all dresses, and she charms in all. 10
 How might we fear our English poetry,
 That long has flourish'd should decay in thee,
 Did not the muses' other hope appear!
 Harmonious Congreve! and forbid our fear;

VERSES IN PRAISE OF MR. DRYDEN. 5
 Congreve! whose fancy's unexhausted store 15
 Has giv'n already much, and promis'd more:
 Congreve shall still preserve thy fame alive,
 And Dryden's muse shall in his friend survive. 18

ON ALEXANDER'S FEAST.

OR, THE POWER OF MUSIC. AN ODE.

From Mr. Pope's Essay on Criticism, I. 376.

HEAR how Timotheus' vary'd lays surprise,
 And bid alternate passions fall and rise!
 While at each change the son of Libyan Jove
 Now burns with glory, and then melts with love:
 Now his fierce eyes with sparkling fury glow, 5
 Now sighs steal out, and tears begin to flow.
 Persians and Greeks like turns of nature found,
 And the world's victor stood subdu'd by sound.
 The pow'r of music all our hearts allow,
 And what Timotheus was is Dryden now. 10

CHARACTER OF DRYDEN,

FROM AN ODE OF GRAY'S.

BEHOLD where Dryden's less presumptuous care
 Wide o'er the fields of glory bear
 Two couriers of ethereal race, [pace.
 With necks in thunder cloth'd, and long-resounding
 Hark, his hands the lyre explore!
 Bright-ey'd fancy hov'ring o'er, 6
 Scatters from her pictur'd urn
 Thoughts that breathe, and words that burn.
 But, ah! 'tis heard no more—
 Oh! lyre divine, what daring spirit 10
 Wakes thee now? tho' he inherit
 Nor the pride nor ample pinion
 That the Theban Eagle bear,
 Sailing with supreme dominion
 Thro' the azure deep of air; 15
 Yet oft before his infant eyes would run
 Such forms as glitter in the muse's ray
 With orient hues, unborrow'd of the sun:

6 VERSES IN PRAISE OF MR. DRYDEN.
Yet shall he mount, and keep his distant way
Beyond the limits of a vulgar fate,
Beneath the good how far—but far above the great. 21

TO THE UNKNOWN AUTHOR OF
ABSALOM AND ACHITOPHEL.

TAKE it as earnest of a faith renew'd,
Your theme is vast, your verse divinely good ;
Where, tho' the Nine their beauteous strokes repeat,
And the turn'd lines on golden anvils beat,
It looks as if they struck'em at a heat. 5
So all serenely great, so just refin'd,
Like angels' love to human seed inclin'd,
It starts a giant, and exalts the kind.
'Tis spirit seen, whose fiery atoms roll,
So brightly fierce, each syllable's a soul. 10
'Tis miniature of man, but he's all heart ;
'Tis what the world would be, but wants the art ;
To whom e'en the Fanatics altars raise,
Bow in their own despite, and grin your praise ;
As if a Milton from the dead arose, 15
Fil'd off the rust, and the right party chose.
Nor, Sir, be shock'd at what the gloomy say ;
Turn not your feet too inward nor too splay.
'Tis gracious all, and great ; push on your theme ;
Lean your griev'd head on David's diadem : 20
David, that rebel Israel's envy mov'd ;
David, by God and all good men belov'd.
The beauties of your Absalom excel,
But more the charms of charming Annabel :
Of Annabel, than May's first morn more bright, 25
Cheerful as summer's noon, and chaste as winter's night.
Of Annabel, the muse's dearest theme ;
Of Annabel, the angel of my dream.
Thus let a broken eloquence attend,
And to your masterpiece these shadows send. 30

NAT. LEE.

TO THE UNKNOWN AUTHOR OF
ABSALOM AND ACHITHOPHEL.

I THOUGHT, forgive my sin, the boasted fire
Of poets' souls did long ago expire;
Of folly or of madness did accuse
The wretch that thought himself possess'd with Muse;
Laugh'd at the god within that did inspire 5
With more than human thoughts the tuneful quire.
But sure 'tis more than fancy, or the dream
Of rhymers slumb'ring by the muses' stream;
Some livelier spark of heav'n, and more refin'd
From earthly dross, fills the great Poet's mind. 10
Witness these mighty and immortal lines,
Thro' each of which th' informing genius shines.
Scarce a diviner flame inspir'd the king,
Of whom thy muse does so sublimely sing:
Not David's self could in a nobler verse 15
His gloriously-offending son rehearse,
Tho' in his breast the prophet's fury met,
The father's fondness, and the poet's wit.
Here all consent in wonder and in praise,
And to the unknown poet altars raise; 20
Which thou must needs accept with equal joy,
As when Æneas heard the wars of Troy,
(Wrapt up himself in darkness and unseen)
Extoll'd with wonder by the Tyrian Queen.
Sure thou already art secure of fame, 25
Nor want'st new glories to exalt thy name.
What father else would have refus'd to own
So great a son as godlike Absalom? 28

R. DUKE.

TO THE CONCEALED AUTHOR OF
ABSALOM AND ACHITHOPHEL.

HAIL heav'n-born Muse! hail ev'ry sacred page
The glory of our isle and of our age;

The inspiring sun to Albion draws more nigh,
 The North at length teems with a work to vie
 With Homer's flame and Virgil's majesty. 5
 While Pindus' lofty heights our Poet fought,
 (His ravish'd mind with vast ideas fraught)
 Our language fail'd beneath his rising thought.
 This checks not his attempt: for Maro's mines
 He drains of all their gold t'adorn his lines. 10
 Thro' each of which the Mantuan Genius shines.
 The rock obey'd the pow'ful Hebrew guide,
 Her flinty breast dissolv'd into a tide:
 Thus on our stubborn language he prevails,
 And makes the Helicon in which he sails; 15
 The dialect, as well as sense, invents.
 And with his poem a new speech presents.
 Hail then, thou matchless bard, thou great unknown!
 That give your country fame, yet shun your own!
 In vain; for ev'ry where your praise you find; 20
 And, not to meet it, you must shun mankind.
 Your loyal theme each loyal reader draws,
 And e'en the factions give your verse applause,
 Whose lightning strikes to ground their idol cause;
 The cause, for whose dear sake they drank a flood 25
 Of civil gore, nor spar'd the Royal blood!
 The cause, whose growth to crush, our prelates wrote
 In vain, almost in vain our heroes fought;
 Yet by one stab of your keen satire dies;
 Before your sacred lines their shatter'd Dagon lies. 30
 Oh! if unworthy we appear to know
 The fire to whom this lovely birth we owe;
 Deny'd our ready homage to express,
 And can at best but thankful be by guess;
 This hope remains; may David's godlike mind, 35
 (For him 'twas wrote) the unknown Author find!
 And having found, show'r equal favours down
 On wit so vast as could oblige a crown. 38

UPON THE AUTHOR OF THE MEDAL.

A SATIRE.

ONCE more our awful poet arms t'engage
 The threat'ning hydra-faction of the age;
 Once more prepares his dreadful pen to wield,
 And ev'ry muse attends him to the field.
 By Art and Nature for this task design'd, 5
 Yet modestly the fight he long declin'd;
 Forbore the torrent of his verse to pour,
 Nor loos'd his satire till the needful hour.
 His sov'reign's right, by patience half betray'd,
 Wak'd his avenging genius to his aid. 10
 Bless'd muse! whose wit with such a cause was crown'd,
 And bless'd the cause that such a champion found!
 With chosen verse upon the foe he falls,
 And black Sedition in each quarter galls;
 Yet, like a prince with subjects forc'd t'engage, 15
 Secure of conquest he rebates his rage;
 His fury not without distinction sheds,
 Hurls mortal bolts, but on devoted heads;
 To less-infected members gentle found,
 Or spares, or else pours balm into the wound. 20
 Such gen'rous grace th' ungrateful tribe abuse
 And trespass on the mercy of his muse:
 Their wretched dogg'rel rhymers forth they bring,
 To snarl and bark against the poet's king;
 A crew that scandalize the nation more 25
 Than all their treason-canting priests before.
 On these he scarce vouchsafes a scornful smile,
 But on their pow'rful patrons turns his style:
 A style so keen, as e'en from faction draws
 The vital poison, stabs to th' heart their cause. 30
 Take then, great Bard! what tribute we can raise;
 Accept our thanks, for you transcend our praise. 32

TO VERSES IN PRAISE OF MR. DRYDEN.

TO THE

UNKNOWN AUTHOR OF THE MEDAL,

A SATIRE :

AND OF ABSALOM AND ACHITHOPHEL.

THUS pious ignorance, with dubious praise,
Altars of old to gods unknown did raise :
They knew not the lov'd deity ; they knew
Divine effects a cause divine did shew ; 4
Nor can we doubt, when such these numbers are,
Such is their cause, tho' the worst muse shall dare
Their sacred worth in humble verse declare.
As gentle Thames, charm'd with thy tuneful song,
Glides in a peaceful majesty along,
No rebel stone, no lofty bank does brave 10
The easy passage of his silent wave ;
So, sacred Poet ! so thy numbers flow,
Sinewy, yet mild as happy lovers woo ;
Strong, yet harmonious too, as planets move,
Yet soft as down upon the wings of Love. 15
How sweet does virtue in your dress appear !
How much more charming when much less severe ?
Whilst you our senses harmlessly beguile,
With all th' allurements of your happy style,
Y^e insinuate loyalty with kind deceit, 20
And into sense th' unthinking many cheat.
So the sweet Thracian with his charming lyre
Into rude nature virtue did inspire ;
So he the savage herd to reason drew,
Yet scarce so sweet, so charmingly, as you. 25
O that you would, with some such pow'rful charm,
Enervate Albion to just valour warm !
Whether much-suffering Charles shall theme afford,
Or the great deeds of godlike James's sword ;
Again fair Gallia might be ours, again 30
Another fleet might pass the subject main,
Another Edward lead the Britons on,
Or such an Ossory as you did moan ;
While in such numbers you, in such a strain,
Inflame their courage, and reward their pain. 35

Let false Achithophel the rout engage,
 Talk easy Absalom to rebel rage ;
 Let frugal Shimei curse in holy zeal,
 Or modest Corah more new plots reveal ;
 Whilst constant to himself, secure of fate, 40
 Good David still maintains the royal state.
 Tho' each in vain such various ills employs,
 Firmly he stands, and e'en those ills enjoys !
 Firm as fair Albion, 'midst the raging main,
 Surveys encircling danger with disdain. 45
 In vain the waves assault the unmov'd shore,
 In vain the winds with mingled fury roar.
 Fair Albion's beauteous cliffs shine whiter than before.
 Nor shalt thou move, tho' hell thy fall conspire,
 Tho' the worse rage of zeal's fanatic fire ; 50
 Thou best, thou greatest, of the British race,
 Thou only fit to fill great Charles's place !
 Ah wretched Britons ! ah too stubborn Isle !
 Ah stiff-neck'd Israel on bless'd Canaan's soil !
 Are those dear proofs of heav'n's indulgence vain,
 Restoring David and his gentle reign ? 56
 Is it in vain thou all the goods dost know
 Auspicious stars on mortals shed below, [flow ?
 While all thy streams with milk, thy lands with honey,
 No more, fond isle ! no more thyself engage
 In civil fury and intestine rage : 61
 No rebel zeal thy duteous land molest,
 But a smooth calm sooth ev'ry peaceful breast,
 While in such charming notes divinely sings,
 The best of Poets of the best of Kings, 65

J. ADAMS.

TO MR. DRYDEN,
 ON HIS *RELIGIO LAICI*.

THOSE gods the pious ancients did adore,
 They learnt in verse devoutly to implore,
 Thinking it rude to use the common way
 Of talk, when they did to such beings pray.

Nay, they that taught religion first, thoughtfit
In verse its sacred precepts to transmit:

So Solon, too, did his first statutes draw,
And ev'ry little stanza was a law.

By these few precedents we plainly see
The primitive design of poetry;

Which, by restoring to its native use,
You gen'rously have rescu'd from abuse.

Whilst your lov'd muse does in sweet numbers sing,
She vindicates her God and godlike king.

Atheist, and rebel too, she does oppose;
(God and the king have always the same foes.)

Legions of verse you raise in their defence,
And write the factious to obedience:

You the bold Arian to arms defy,
A conqu'ring champion for the deity

Against the whigs' first parents, who did dare
To disinherit God Almighty's heir.

And what the hot-brain'd Arian first began
Is carry'd on by the Socinian,

Who still associate to keep God a man.

But 'tis the prince of Poets' task alone

T' assert the rights of God's and Charles's throne,
Whilst vulgar poets purchase vulgar fame

By chaunting Chloris' or fair Phillis' name;
Whose reputation shall last as long

As fops and ladies sing the amorous song.

A nobler subject wisely they refuse,

The mighty weight would crush their feeble muse.

So story tells, a painter once would try

With his bold hand to limn a deity;

And he, by frequent practising that part,

Could draw a minor god with wondrous art;

But when great Jove did to the workman sit,

The thunderer such horror did beget,

That put the frightened artist to a stand,

And made his pencil drop from's baffled hand.

MISCELLANIES.

ASTRÆA REDUX.

A POEM.

*On the happy Restoration and Return of his Sacred Majesty,
Charles the Second. 1660.*

* Jam reditet Virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna."

VIRG.

The last great age, foretold by sacred rhymes,
Renews its finish'd course; Saturnian times
Roll round again.

NOW with a general peace the world was blest,
While ours, a world divided from the rest,
A dreadful quiet felt, and, worser far
Than arms, a sullen interval of war:
Thus when black clouds draw down the lab'ring skies,
Ere yet abroad the winged thunder flies, 6
An horrid stillness first invades the ear,
And in that silence we the tempest fear.
Th' ambitious Swede, like restless billows tost,
On this hand gaining what on that he lost, 10
Tho' in his life he blood and ruin breath'd,
To his now guideless kingdom peace bequeath'd;
And Heav'n, that seem'd regardless of our fate,
For France and Spain did miracles create;
Such mortal quarrels to compose in peace, 15
As Nature bred, and int'rest did increase.
We sigh'd to hear the fair Iberian bride
Must grow a lily to the lily's side,
While our cross stars deny'd us Charles's bed,
Whom our first flames and virgin love did wed. 20
For his long absence Church and State did groan;
Madness the pulpit, Faction seiz'd the throne;
Experienc'd age in deep despair was lost,
To see the rebel thrive, the loyal cross'd:
Youth that with joys had unacquainted been, 25
Envy'd grey hairs that once good days had seen:
We thought our fires, not with their own content,
Had, ere we came to age, our portion spent.
Nor could our nobles hope their bold attempt,
Who ruin'd crowns, would coronets exempt: 30

For when, by their designing leaders taught
 To strike at pow'r, which for themselves they fought,
 The vulgar, gull'd into rebellion, arm'd,
 Their blood to action by their prize was warm'd.
 The sacred purple then, and scarlet gown, 35
 Like sanguine dye, to elephants was shown.
 Thus when the bold Typhœus scal'd the sky,
 And forc'd great Jove from his own heav'n to fly,
 (What king, what crown, from Treason's reach is free,
 If Jove and heav'n can violated be?) 40
 The lesser gods, that shar'd his prosp'rous state,
 All suffer'd in the exil'd Thund'rer's fate.
 The rabble now such freedom did enjoy,
 As winds at sea, that use it to destroy :
 Blind as the Cyclop, and as wild as he, 45
 They own'd a lawless savage liberty,
 Like that our painted ancestors so priz'd,
 Ere Empire's arts their breasts had civiliz'd.
 How great were then our Charles's woes, who thus
 Was forc'd to suffer for himself and us !
 He, toss'd by fate, and hurry'd up and down,
 Heir to his father's sorrows with his crown,
 Could taste no sweets of youth's desired age,
 But found his life too true a pilgrimage.
 Unconquer'd yet in that forlorn estate, 55
 His manly courage overcame his fate.
 His wounds he took, like Romans, on his breast,
 Which by his virtue were with laurels drest.
 As souls reach heav'n while yet in bodies pent,
 So did he live above his banishment. 60
 That sun, which we beheld with cozen'd eyes
 Within the water, mov'd along the skies.
 How easy 'tis, when Destiny proves kind,
 With full-spread sails to run before the wind !
 But those that 'gainst stiff gales laveering go, 65
 Must be at once resolv'd and skilful too.
 He would not, like soft Otho, hope prevent,
 But stay'd and suffer'd Fortune to repent.
 These virtues Galba in a stranger fought,
 And Piso to adopted empire brought. 70

How shall I then my doubtful thoughts express,
 That must his suff'rings both regret and bless !
 For when his early valour Heav'n had cross'd,
 And all at Worc'ster but the honour lost,
 Forc'd into exile from his rightful throne, 75
 He made all countries where he came his own ;
 And viewing monarchs' secret arts of sway,
 A royal factor for his kingdoms lay.
 Thus banish'd David spent abroad his time,
 When to be God's anointed was his crime ; 80
 And when restor'd made his proud neighbours rue
 Those choice remarks he from his travels drew.
 Nor is he only by afflictions shown
 To conquer other's realms, but rule his own :
 Recov'ring hardly what he lost before, 85
 His right endears it much, his purchase more.
 Inur'd to suffer ere he came to reign,
 No rash procedure will his actions stain :
 To bus'ness ripen'd by digestive thought,
 His future rule is into method brought : 90
 As they who first proportion understand,
 With easy practice reach a master's hand.
 Well might the ancient poets then confer
 On Night the honour'd name of Counsellor,
 Since, struck with rays of prosp'rous fortune blind,
 We light alone in dark afflictions find. 96
 In such adversities to sceptres train'd,
 The name of Great his famous grandfire gain'd ;
 Who yet a king alone in name and right,
 With hunger, cold, and angry Jove did fight ; 100
 Shock'd by a covenanting league's vast pow'rs,
 As holy and as catholic as ours,
 Till fortune's fruitless spite had made it known
 Her blows not shook, but rivited his throne.
 Some lazy ages, lost in sleep and ease, 105
 No action leave to busy chronicles :
 Such, whose supine felicity but makes
 In story chasms, in epochas mistakes ;
 O'er whom time gently shakes his wings of down,
 Till with his silent sickle they are mown. 110

Such is not Charles's too too active age,
 Which, govern'd by the wild distemper'd rage
 Of some black star infecting all the skies,
 Made him at his own cost like Adam wife.
 Tremble, ye Nations! which, secure before, 115
 Laugh'd at those arms that 'gainst ourselves we bore;
 Rous'd by the lash of his own stubborn tail,
 Our Lion now will foreign foes assail.
 With alga who the sacred altar strews?
 To all the sea-gods Charles an off'ring owes: 120
 A bull to thee, Portunus, shall be slain,
 A lamb to you, ye Tempests of the main:
 For those loud storms, that did against him roar,
 Have cast his shipwreck'd vessel on the shore,
 Yet as wise artists mix their colours so, 125
 That by degrees they from each other go.
 Black steals unheeded from the neighb'ring white,
 Without offending the well-cozen'd sight;
 So on us stole our blessed change, while we
 Th' effect did feel, but scarce the manner see. 130
 Frosts that constrain the ground, and birth deny,
 To flow'rs that in its womb expecting lie,
 Do seldom their usurping pow'r withdraw,
 But raging floods pursue their hasty thaw.
 Our thaw was mild, the cold not chas'd away, 135
 But lost in kindly heat of lengthen'd day.
 Heav'n would no bargain for its blessings drive,
 But what we could not pay for freely give.
 The Prince of peace would, like himself, confer
 A gift unhop'd without the price of war: 140
 Yet, as he knew his blessings' worth, took care
 That we should know it by repeated pray'r, [thence,
 Which storm'd the skies, and ravish'd Charles from
 As heav'n itself is took by violence.
 Booth's forward valour only serv'd to show 145
 He durst that duty pay we all did owe:
 Th' attempt was fair; but heav'n's prefixed hour
 Not come: so, like the watchful traveller,
 That by the moon's mistaken light did rise,
 Lay down again, and clos'd his weary eyes. 150



DRYDEN'S POEMS
 He like a patient angler, ere he strook,
 Would let him play awhile upon the hook.
Vide Astron Rediviv. Vol. I. Page 5. line 17.

'Twas Monk, whom providence design'd to loose
 Those real bonds false freedom did impose.
 The blessed saints, that watch'd this turning scene,
 Did from their stars with joyful wonder lean,
 To see small clues draw vastest weights along, 155
 Not in their bulk, but in their order strong.
 Thus pencils can by one slight touch restore
 Smiles to that changed face that wept before.
 With ease such fond chimeras we pursue,
 As fancy frames for fancy to subdue: 160
 But when ourselves to action we betake,
 It shuns the mint like gold that chymists make.
 How hard was then his task, at once to be
 What in the body naturally we see?
 Man's architect distinctly did ordain 165
 The charge of muscles, nerves, and of the brain,
 Thro' viewless conduits spirits to dispense,
 The springs of motion from the seat of sense.
 'Twas not the hasty product of a day,
 But the well-ripen'd fruit of wise delay. 170
 He, like a patient angler, ere he strook,
 Would let him play a while upon the hook.
 Our healthful food the stomach labours thus,
 At first embracing what it straight doth crush.
 Wise leaches will not vain receipts obtrude, 175
 While growing pains pronounce the humours crude;
 Deaf to complaints they wait upon the ill,
 Till some safe crisis authorise their skill.
 Nor could his acts too close a vizard wear,
 To 'scape their eyes whom guilt had taught to fear,
 And guard with caution that polluted nest 181
 Whence Legion twice before was dispossess:
 Once sacred house; which when they enter'd in,
 They thought the place could sanctify a sin?
 Like those that vainly hop'd kind heav'n would wink,
 While to excess on martyrs' tombs they drink: 186
 And as devouter Turks first warn their souls
 To part before they taste forbidden bowls,
 So these, when their black crimes they went about,
 First timely charm'd their useless conscience out.

Religion's name against itself was made ; 191
 The shadow serv'd the substance to invade ;
 Like zealous missions, they did care pretend
 Of souls in shew, but made the gold their end.
 Th' incens'd pow'rs beheld with scorn from high
 An heaven so far distant from the sky, 196
 Which durst, with horses' hoofs that beat the ground,
 And martial brass, belie the thunder's sound ;
 'Twas hence at length just vengeance thought it fit
 To speed their ruin by their impious wit. 200
 Thus Sforza, curs'd with a too fertile brain,
 Lost by his wiles the pow'r his wit did gain.
 Henceforth their *fougue* must spend at lesser rate
 Than in its flames to wrap a nation's fate.
 Suffer'd to live, they are like helots set, 205
 A virtuous shame within us to beget :
 For by example most we sinn'd before,
 And glass-like clearness mix'd with frailty bore.
 But since reform'd by what we did amiss,
 We by our suff'rings learnt to prize our bliss. 210
 Like early lovers, whose unpractis'd hearts
 Were long the may-game of malicious arts,
 When once they find their jealousies were vain,
 With double heat renew their fires again.
 'Twas this produc'd the joy that hurry'd o'er 215
 Such swarms of English to the neighb'ring shore,
 To fetch that prize by which Batavia made
 So rich amends for our impoverish'd trade.
 Oh ! had you seen from Schevelin's barren shore
 (Crowded with troops, and barren now no more) 220
 Afflicted Holland to his farewell bring
 True sorrow, Holland to regret a king !
 While waiting him his royal fleet did ride,
 And willing winds to their lower'd sails deny'd.
 The wav'ring streamers, flags, and standards out 225
 The merry seamen's rude but cheerful shout ;
 And last the cannons' voice that shook the skies,
 And as it fares in sudden ecstasies,
 At once bereft us both of ears and eyes.

The Naseby now no longer England's shame,
 But better to be lost in Charles' name,
 (Like some unequal bride in nobler sheets)
 Receives her lord, the joyful London meets
 The princely York, himself alone a freight;
 The swift sure groans beneath great Gloster's weight,
 Secure as when the halcyon breeds, with these 236
 He that was born to drown might cross the seas.
 Heav'n could not own a providence, and take
 The wealth three nations ventur'd at a stake.
 The same indulgence Charles's voyage blest'd, 240
 Which in his right had miracles confess'd.
 The winds, that never moderation knew,
 Afraid to blow too much, too faintly blew;
 Or out of breath, with joy, could not enlarge
 Their straiten'd lungs, or conscious of their charge,
 The British Amphytrite, smooth and clear, 246
 In richer azure never did appear,
 Proud her returning Prince to entertain
 With the submitted fasces of the main.

AND welcome now, great monarch! to your own;
 Behold th' approaching cliffs of Albion: 251
 It is no longer motion cheats your view;
 As you meet it the land approacheth you.
 The land returns, and in the white it wears,
 The marks of penitence and sorrow bears. 255
 But you, whose goodness your descent doth show,
 Your heav'nly parentage and earthly too;
 By that same mildness which your father's crown
 Before did ravish, shall secure your own.
 Not ty'd to rules of policy, you find 260
 Revenge less sweet than a forgiving mind.
 Thus, when th' Almighty would to Moses give
 A sight of all he could behold and live,
 A voice before his entry did proclaim
 "Long suffering, Goodness, Mercy," in his name.
 Your pow'r to justice doth submit your cause, 266
 Your goodness only is above the laws,

Whose rigid letter, while pronounc'd by you,
 Is softer made: so winds that tempests brew,
 When thro' Arabian groves they take their flight,
 Made wanton with rich odours, lose their spite: 270
 And as those lees that trouble it refine
 The agitated soul of gen'rous wine;
 So tears of joy, for your returning, spilt,
 Work out and expiate our former guilt. 275
 Methinks I see those crowds on Dover's strand,
 Who in their haste to welcome you to land
 Chok'd up the beach with their still-growing store,
 And made a wilder torrent on the shore;
 While, spurr'd with eager thoughts of past delight,
 Those who had seen you court a second fight; 281
 Preventing still your steps, and making haste
 To meet you often wheresoe'er you pass'd.
 How shall I speak of that triumphant day,
 When you renew'd th' expiring pomp of May! 285
 (A month that owns an int'rest in your name;
 You and the flow'rs are its peculiar claim.)
 That star that at your birth shone out so bright,
 It stain'd the duller sun's meridian light,
 Did once again its potent fires renew, 290
 Guiding our eyes to find and worship you.

And now Time's whiter series is begun,
 Which in soft centuries shall smoothly run:
 Those clouds that overcast your morn shall fly
 Dispell'd to farthest corners of the sky. 295
 Our nation with united int'rest bless'd,
 Not now content to poise shall sway the rest.
 Abroad your empire shall no limits know,
 But, like the sea, in boundless circles flow,
 Your much-lov'd fleet shall with a wide command 300
 Besiege the petty monarchs of the land:
 And as old Time his offspring swallow'd down,
 Our ocean in its depths all seas shall drown.
 Their wealthy trade from pirates' rapine free,
 Our merchants shall no more advent'ers be, 305
 Nor in the farthest East those dangers fear,
 Which humble Holland must dissemble here.

Spain to your gift alone her Indies owes ;
 For what the pow'rful takes not he bestows :
 And France, that did an exile's presence fear,
 May justly apprehend you still too near. 310
 At home the hateful names of party cease,
 And factious souls are weary'd into peace.
 The discontented now are only they
 Whose crimes before did your just cause betray : 315
 Of those your edicts some reclaim from sin,
 But most your life and blest'd example win.
 Oh happy Prince! whom heav'n hath taught the way,
 By paying vows, to have more vows to pay!
 Oh happy age! oh times like those alone, 320
 By fate reserv'd for great Augustus' throne!
 When the joint growth of arms and arts foresaw
 The world a monarch, and that monarch you. 323



ANNUS MIRABILIS:

THE YEAR OF WONDERS, M.DC.LXVI.

AN HISTORICAL POEM.

AN ACCOUNT OF THE ENSUING POEM,

In a Letter to the Hon. Sir Robert Howard.

SIR,

I AM so many ways obliged to you, and so little able to return your favours, that, like those who owe too much, I can only live by getting farther into your debt. You have not only been careful of my fortune, which was the effect of your nobleness, but you have been solicitous of my reputation, which is that of your kindness. It is not long since I gave you the trouble of perusing a play for me, and now, instead of an acknowledgment, I have given you a greater, in the correction of a Poem. But since you are to bear this persecution, I will at least give you the encouragement of a martyr: you could never suffer in a nobler cause. For I have chosen the most heroic subject which any Poet could desire: I have taken upon me to describe the motives, the beginning, progress, and successes, of a most just and necessary war; in it the care, management, and prudence, of our king; the conduct and valour of a royal admiral, and of two incomparable generals; the invincible courage of our captains and seamen; and three glorious victories the result of all. After this I have, in the fire, the most deplorable, but, withal, the greatest argument that can be imagined; the destruction being so swift, so sudden, so vast and miserable, as nothing can parallel in story. The former part of this Poem, relating to the war, is but a due expiation for my not having served my king and country in it. All gentlemen are almost obliged to it, and I know no reason we should give that advantage to the commonalty of England, to be foremost in brave actions, which the nobles of France would never suffer in their

peasants. I should not have written this, but to a person who has been ever forward to appear in all employments whither his honour and generosity have called him. The latter part of my Poem, which describes the fire, I owe, first to the piety and fatherly affection of our Monarch to his suffering subjects; and, in the second place, to the courage, loyalty, and magnanimity of the City: both which were so conspicuous, that I have wanted words to celebrate them as they deserve. I have called my Poem Historical, not Epic, though both the actions and actors are as much heroic as any poem can contain. But, since the action is not properly one, nor that accomplished in the last successes, I have judged it too bold a title for a few stanzas, which are little more in number than a single Iliad, or the longest of the *Æneids*. For this reason (I mean not of length, but broken action, tied too severely to the laws of history) I am apt to agree with those who rank Lucan rather among historians in verse than Epic poets; in whose room, if I am not deceived, Silius Italicus, though a worse writer, may more justly be admitted. I have chosen to write my poem in quatrains, or stanzas of four, in alternate rhyme, because I have ever judged them more noble, and of greater dignity, both for the sound and number, than any other verse in use amongst us; in which I am sure I have your approbation. The learned languages have certainly a great advantage of us in not being tied to the slavery of any rhyme, and were less constrained in the quantity of every syllable, which they might vary with spondees or dactyls, besides so many other helps of grammatical figures, for the lengthening or abbreviation of them, than the modern are in the close of that one syllable, which often confines, and more often corrupts, the sense of all the rest. But in this necessity of our rhymes I have always found the couplet verse most easy, though not so proper for this occasion: for there the work is sooner at an end, every two lines concluding the labour of the poet: but in quatrains he is to carry it farther on, and not only so, but to bear along in his head the troublesome

sense of four lines together. For those who write correctly in this kind must needs acknowledge, that the last line of the stanza is to be considered in the composition of the first. Neither can we give ourselves the liberty of making any part of a verse for the sake of rhyme, or concluding with a word which is not current English, or using the variety of female rhymes, all which our fathers practised: and for the female rhymes, they are still in use amongst other nations; with the Italian in every line, with the Spaniard promiscuously, with the French alternately: as those who have read the *Alarique*, the *Pucelli*, or any of their later poems, will agree with me. And besides this, they write in Alexandrins, or verses of six feet; such as amongst us is the old translation of Homer by Chapman; all which, by lengthening of their chain, makes the sphere of their activity the larger. I have dwelt too long upon the choice of my stanza, which you may remember is much better defended in the preface to *Gondibert*: and therefore I will hasten to acquaint you with my endeavours in the writing. In general, I will only say, I have never yet seen the description of any naval fight in the proper terms which are used at sea; and if there be any such in another language, as that of Lucan in the Third of his *Pharsalia*, yet I could not avail myself of it in the English, the terms of art in every tongue bearing more of the idiom of it than any other words. We hear indeed among our poets of the thundering of guns, the smoke, the disorder, and the slaughter; but all these are common notions: and certainly as those who, in a logical dispute keep in general terms, would hide a fallacy; so those who do it in any poetical description would veil their ignorance.

“ Descriptas servare vices, operumque colores,
 “ Cur ego, si nequeo ignoroque, Poeta salutor?”

For my own part, if I had little knowledge of the sea, yet I have thought it no shame to learn: and if I have made some few mistakes, it is only, as you can bear me witness, because I have wanted opportunity to correct them: the whole poem being first written, and now

sent you from a place, where I have not so much as the converse of any seamen. Yet, though the trouble I had in writing it was great, it was more than recompensed by the pleasure. I found myself so warm in celebrating the praises of military men, two such especially as the Prince and General, that it is no wonder if they inspired me with thoughts above my ordinary level. And I am well satisfied that, as they are incomparably the best subject I ever had, excepting only the Royal Family; so also, that this I have written of them is much better than what I have performed on any other. I have been forced to help out other arguments; but this has been bountiful to me: they have been low and barren of praise, and I have exalted them, and made them fruitful; but here—“*Omnia sponte sua reddit justissima tellus.*” I have had a large, a fair, and a pleasant field; so fertile, that without my cultivating it has given two harvests in a summer, and in both oppressed the reaper. All other greatness in subjects is only counterfeit; it will not endure the test of danger: the greatness of arms is only real; other greatness burdens a nation with its weight; this supports it with its strength. And as it is the happiness of the age, so it is the peculiar goodness of the best of Kings, that we may praise his subjects without offending him. Doubtless it proceeds from a just confidence of his own virtue, which the lustre of no other can be so great as to darken in him; for the good or the valiant are never safely praised under a bad or a degenerate prince. But to return from this digression to a farther account of my poem: I must crave leave to tell you, that as I have endeavoured to adorn it with noble thoughts, so much more to express those thoughts with elocution. The composition of all poems is, or ought to be, of wit; and wit in the poet, or wit-writing (if you will give me leave to use a school distinction) is no other than the faculty of imagination in the writer, which, like a nimble spaniel, beats over and ranges through the field of memory till it springs the quarry it hunted after; or, without metaphor, which searches over all the memory

for the species or ideas of those things which it designs to represent. Wit written, is that which is well defined the happy result of thought, or product of imagination. But to proceed from wit, in the general notion of it, to the proper wit of an heroic or historical poem, I judge it chiefly to consist in the delightful imaging of persons, actions, passions, or things. It is not the jerk or sting of an epigram, nor the seeming contradiction of a poor antithesis, (the delight of an ill-judging audience in a play of rhyme) nor the gingle of a more poor paranomasia; neither is it so much the morality of a grave sentence, affected by Lucan, but more sparingly used by Virgil; but it is some lively and apt description, dressed in such colours of speech, that it sets before your eyes the absent object as perfectly, and more delightfully, than nature. So then the first happiness of the poet's imagination is properly invention, or finding of the thought; the second is fancy, or the variation, deriving, or moulding of that thought as the judgment represents it proper to the subject; the third is elocution, or the art of cloathing and adorning that thought, so found and varied in apt, significant, and sounding words. The quickness of the imagination is seen in the invention, the fertility in the fancy, and the accuracy in the expression. For the two first of these Ovid is famous amongst the poets; for the latter Virgil. Ovid images more often the movements and affections of the mind, either combating between two contrary passions, or extremely discomposed by one. His words therefore are the least part of his care; for he pictures nature in disorder, with which the study and choice of words is inconsistent. This is the proper wit of dialogue or discourse, and consequently of the drama, where all that is said is to be supposed the effect of sudden thought; which, though it excludes not the quickness of wit in repartees, yet admits not a too curious election of words, too frequent allusions, or use of tropes, or, in fine, any thing that shews remoteness of thought or labour in the writer. On the other side, Virgil speaks not so often to

us in the person of another, like Ovid, but in his own: he relates almost all things as from himself, and thereby gains more liberty than the other to express his thoughts with all the graces of elocution, to write more figuratively, and to confess as well the labour as the force of his imagination. Though he describes his Dido well and naturally, in the violence of her passions, yet he must yield in that to the Myrrha, the Biblis, the Althæa, of Ovid; for, as great an admirer of him as I am, I must acknowledge that, if I see not more of their souls than I see of Dido's, at least I have a greater concernment for them; and that convinces me that Ovid has touched those tender strokes more delicately than Virgil could. But when action or persons are to be described, when any such image is to be set before us, how bold, how masterly, are the strokes of Virgil! we see the objects he presents us with, in their native figures, in their proper motion; but so we see them, as our own eyes could never have beheld them so beautiful in themselves. We see the soul of the poet, like that universal one of which he speaks, informing and moving through all his pictures:

“-----Totamque infusa per artus

“Mens agitat molem, et magno se corpore miscet.”

We behold him embellishing his images, as he makes Venus breathing beauty upon her son Æneas:

“-----Lumenque juventæ

“Purpureum, et lætos oculis afflarat honores:

“Quale manus addunt ebori decus, aut ubi flavo

“Argentum Pariusve lapis circumdatur auro.”

See his Tempest, his Funeral Sports, his Combat of Turnus and Æneas; and in his Georgics, which I esteem the divinest part of all his writings, the Plague, the Country, the Battle of the Bulls, the Labour of the Bees, and those many other excellent images of nature, most of which are neither great in themselves, nor have any natural ornament to bear them up; but the words wherewith he describes them are so excellent, that it might be well applied to him which was said by Ovid, “*Materiam superabat opus.*” The very sound of his words has often somewhat that is connatural to

the subject; and while we read him, we sit, as in a play, beholding the scenes of what he represents. To perform this, he made frequent use of tropes, which, you know, change the nature of a known word, by applying it to some other signification; and this is it which Horace means in his Epistle to the Pisos:

“Dixeris egregie, notum si callida verbum
“Reddiderit junctura novum”-----

But I am sensible I have presumed too far to entertain you with a rude discourse of that art which you both know so well, and put into practice with so much happiness. Yet, before I leave Virgil, I must own the vanity to tell you, and by you the world, that he has been my master in this poem: I have followed him every where; I know not with what success, but I am sure with diligence enough: my images are many of them copied from him, and the rest are imitations of him. My expressions also are as near as the idioms of the two languages would admit of in translation. And this, Sir, I have done with that boldness for which I will stand accountable to any of our little critics, who perhaps are no better acquainted with him than I am. Upon your first perusal of this poem, you have taken notice of some words which I have innovated (if it be too bold for me to say refined) upon his Latin; which, as I offer not to introduce into English prose, so I hope they are neither improper nor altogether inelegant in verse; and in this Horace will again defend me.

“Et nova, sictaque nuper, habebunt verba fidem, si
“Græco fonte cadant, parce detorta.”-----

The inference is exceeding plain; for if a Roman poet might have liberty to coin a word, supposing only that it was derived from the Greek, was put into a Latin termination, and that he used this liberty but seldom, and with modesty; how much more justly may I challenge that privilege to do it, with the same prerequisites, from the best and most judicious of Latin writers? In some places, where either the fancy or

the words were his, or any other's, I have noted it in the margin, that I might not seem a plagiarist; in others I have neglected it, to avoid as well tediousness as the affectation of doing it too often. Such descriptions or images, well wrought, which I promise not for mine, are, as I have said, the adequate delight of heroic poetry; for they beget admiration, which is its proper object; as the images of the burlesque, which is contrary to this, by the same reason beget laughter: for the one shews nature beautified, as in the picture of a fair woman, which we all admire; the other shews her deformed, as in that of a leper, or of a fool, with distorted face and antique gestures, at which we cannot forbear to laugh, because it is a deviation from nature. But though the same images serve equally for the epic poetry, and for the historic and panegyric, which are branches of it, yet a several sort of sculpture is to be used in them. If some of them are to be like those of Juvenal, "*Stantes in curribus Æmilianis*," heroes drawn in their triumphal chariots, and in their full proportion, others are to be, like that of Virgil, "*Spirantia mollius æra*:" there is somewhat more of softness and tenderness to be shewn in them. You will soon find I write not this without concern. Some, who have seen a paper of verses which I wrote last year to her Highness the Duchess, have accused them of that only thing I could defend in them. They said, I did "*Humi serpere*;" that I wanted not only height of fancy, but dignity of words, to set it off. I might well answer with that of Horace, "*Nunc non erat hic locus*:" I knew I addressed them to a lady, and accordingly I affected the softness of expression, and the smoothness of measure, rather than the height of thought; and in what I did endeavour, it is no vanity to say I have succeeded. I detest arrogance; but there is some difference betwixt that and a just defence. But I will not farther bribe your candor or the readers: I leave them to speak for me, and, if they can, to make out that character, not pretending to a greater, which I have given them.

And now, Sir, it is time I should relieve you from the tedious length of this account. You have better and more profitable employment for your hours, and I wrong the public to detain you longer. In conclusion, I must leave my poem to you with all its faults, which I hope to find fewer in the printing by your emendations. I know you are not of the number of those of whom the younger Pliny speaks, "*Nec sunt parum multi, qui carpere amicos suos judicium vocant:*" I am rather too secure of you on that side. Your candour in pardoning my errors may make you more remiss in correcting them, if you will not withal consider that they come into the world with your approbation, and through your hands. I beg from you the greatest favour you can confer upon an absent person, since I repose upon your management what is dearest to me, my fame and reputation; and therefore I hope it will stir you up to make my poem fairer by many of your blots; if not, you know the story of the gamester, who married the rich man's daughter, and, when her father denied the portion, christened all the children by his surname, that if, in conclusion, they must beg, they should do so by one name as well as by the other. But since the reproach of my faults will light on you, it is but reason I should do you that justice to the readers, to let them know that, if there be any thing tolerable in this poem, they owe the argument to your choice, the writing to your encouragement, the correction to your judgment, and the care of it to your friendship, to which he must ever acknowledge himself to owe all things, who is,

SIR,

The most obedient and most
faithful of your servants,

JOHN DRYDEN.

From Charlton in Wiltshire.
Nov. 10, 1666.

TO THE
METROPOLIS OF GREAT BRITAIN,

The most Renowned and late Flourishing

CITY OF LONDON,

IN ITS REPRESENTATIVES

*The Lord Mayor and Court of Aldermen, the Sheriffs and
Common Council of it.*

AS, perhaps, I am the first who ever presented a work of this nature to the metropolis of any nation, so it is likewise consonant to justice, that he who was to give the first example of such a dedication, should begin it with that city which has set a pattern to all others of true loyalty, invincible courage, and unshaken constancy. Other cities have been praised for the same virtues, but I am much deceived if any have so dearly purchased their reputation: their fame has been won them by cheaper trials than an expensive though necessary war, a consuming pestilence, and a more consuming fire. To submit yourselves with that humility to the judgments of Heaven, and, at the same time, to raise yourselves with that vigour above all human enemies; to be combated at once from above and from below, to be struck down and to triumph; I know not whether such trials have been ever paralleled in any nation; the resolution and successes of them never can be. Never had Prince or people more mutual reason to love each other, if suffering for each other can endear affection. You have come together a pair of matchless lovers, through many difficulties; he through a long exile, various traverses of fortune, and the interposition of many rivals, who violently ravished and withheld you from him; and certainly you have had your share in sufferings. But Providence has cast upon you want of trade, that you might appear bountiful to your country's necessities;

and the rest of your afflictions are not more the effects of God's displeasure (frequent examples of them having been in the reign of the most excellent princes) than occasions for the manifesting of your Christian and civil virtues. To you, therefore, this Year of Wonders is justly dedicated, because you have made it so. You, who are to stand a wonder to all years and ages, and who have built yourselves an immortal monument on your own ruins; you are now a phoenix in her ashes, and, as far as humanity can approach, a great emblem of the suffering Deity: but Heaven never made so much piety and virtue to leave it miserable. I have heard, indeed, of some virtuous persons who have ended unfortunately, but never of any virtuous nation: Providence is engaged too deeply, when the cause becomes so general; and I cannot imagine it has resolved the ruin of that people at home, which it has blessed abroad with such successes. I am therefore to conclude that your sufferings are at an end; and that one part of my poem has not been more an history of your destruction than the other a prophecy of your restoration. The accomplishment of which happiness, as it is the wish of all true Englishmen, so it is by none more passionately desired than by

The greatest of your admirers,

And most humble of your servants,

JOHN DRYDEN.



ANNUS MIRABILIS ;

21

THE YEAR OF WONDERS, M.DC.LXVI.

IN thriving arts long time had Holland grown,
Crouching at home, and cruel when abroad :
Scarce leaving us the means to claim our own,
Our king they courted, and our merchants aw'd. 4

II.

Trade, which, like blood, should circularly flow,
Stopp'd in their channels, found its freedom lost :
Thither the wealth of all the world did go,
And seem'd but shipwreck'd on so base a coast. 8

III.

For them alone the heavens had kindly heat,
In eastern quarries rip'ning precious dew :
For them the Idumæan balm did sweat,
And in hot Ceylon spicy forests grew. 12

IV.

The sun but seem'd the lab'rer of the year ;
Each waxing moon supply'd her wat'ry store,
To swell those tides which from the line did bear
Their brimful vessels to the Belgian shore. 16

V.

Thus, mighty in her ships, stood Carthage long,
And swept the riches of the world from far ;
Yet stoop'd to Rome, less wealthy, but more strong ;
And this may prove our second Punic war. 20

VI.

What peace can be where both to one pretend ?
(But they more diligent, and we more strong)
Or if a peace, it soon must have an end ;
For they would grow too powerful were it long. 24

VII.

Behold two nations then, engag'd so far,
That each seven years the fit must shake each land :
Where France will side to weaken us by war,
Who only can his vast designs withstand. 28

VIII.

See how he feeds th' Iberian with delays,
To render us his timely friendship vain ;

And, while his secret soul in Flanders preys,
He rocks the cradle of the babe of Spain.

32

IX.

Such deep designs of empire does he lay
O'er them whose cause he seems to take in hand ;
And prudently would make them lords at sea,
To whom with ease he can give laws by land.

36

X.

This saw our king ; and long within his breast
His pensive counsels balanc'd to and fro :
He griev'd the land he freed should be oppress'd,
And he less for it than usurpers do.

40

XI.

His gen'rous mind the fair ideas drew
Of fame and honour, which in dangers lay ;
Where wealth like fruit on precipices grew ;
Not to be gather'd but by birds of prey.

44

XII.

The loss and gain each fatally were great ;
And still his subjects call'd aloud for war ;
But peaceful kings, o'er martial people set,
Each other's poise and counterbalance are.

48

XIII.

He first survey'd the charge with careful eyes,
Which none but mighty monarchs could maintain ;
Yet judg'd, like vapours that from limbecs rise,
It would in richer show'rs descend again.

52

XIV.

At length resolv'd t'assert the wat'ry ball,
He in himself did whole armadoes bring :
Him aged seamen might their master call,
And chuse for gen'ral, were he not their king.

56

XV.

It seems as ev'ry ship their sov'reign knows,
His awful summons they so soon obey ;
So hear the scaly herd when Proteus blows*,
And so to pasture follow thro' the sea.

60

[* When Proteus blows.]

----- "Coeruleus Proteus immania ponti
"rmenta et magnas ascit sub gurgite Phocas.

XVI.

To see this fleet upon the ocean move,
 Angels drew wide the curtains of the skies;
 And heaven, as if there wanted lights above,
 For tapers made two glaring comets rise. 64

XVII.

Whether they unctuous exhalations are
 Fir'd by the sun, or seeming so alone,
 Or each some more remote and slipp'ry star,
 Which loses footing when to mortals shown: 68

XVIII.

Or one, that bright companion of the sun,
 Whose glorious aspect seal'd our new-born king;
 And now a round of greater years begun,
 New influence from his walks of light did bring. 72

XIX.

Victorious York did first, with fam'd success,
 To his known valour make the Dutch give place:
 Thus heaven our monarch's fortune did confess,
 Beginning conquest from his royal race. 76

XX.

But since it was decreed, auspicious king!
 In Britain's right that thou shouldst wed the main,
 Heaven, as a gage, would cast some precious thing,
 And therefore doom'd that Lawson should be slain. 80

XXI.

Lawson amongst the foremost met his fate
 Whom sea-green syrens from the rocks lament:
 Thus as an off'ring for the Grecian state,
 He first was kill'd who first to battle went. 84

XXII.

Their chief blown up, in air, not waves, expir'd,
 To which his pride presum'd to give the law:
 The Dutch confess'd heaven present, and retir'd,
 And all was Britain the wide ocean saw. 88

XXIII.

To nearest ports their shatter'd ships repair,
 Where by our dreadful cannon they lay aw'd;
 So rev'rently men quit the open air,
 When thunder speaks the angry gods abroad. 92

XXIV.

And now approach'd their fleet from India, fraught
 With all the riches of the rising sun :
 And precious sand from southern climates brought,
 The fatal regions where the war begun. 96

XXV.

Like hunted castors, conscious of their store,
 Their way-laid wealth to Norway's coast they bring ;
 There first the North's cold bosom spices bore,
 And winter brooded on the eastern spring. 100

XXVI.

By the rich scent we found our perfum'd prey,
 Which, flank'd with rocks, did close in covert lie ;
 And round about their murd'ring cannon lay,
 At once to threaten and invite the eye. 104

XXVII.

Fiercer than cannon, and than rocks more hard,
 The English undertake th' unequal war :
 Sev'n ships alone, by which the port is barr'd,
 Besiege the Indies, and all Denmark dare. 108

XXVIII.

These fight like husbands, but like lovers those :
 These fain would keep, and those more fain enjoy ;
 And to such height their frantic passion grows,
 That what both love both hazard to destroy. 112

XXIX.

Amidst whole heaps of spices lights a ball,
 And now their odours arm'd against them fly :
 Some preciously by shatter'd porcelain fall,
 And some by aromatic splinters die. 116

XXX.

And though by tempests of the prize bereft,
 In heaven's inclemency some ease we find :
 Our foes we vanquish'd by our valour left,
 And only yielded to the seas and wind. 120

XXXI.

Nor wholly lost we so deserv'd a prey ;
 For storms repenting part of it restor'd ;
 Which, as a tribute from the Baltic sea,
 The British ocean sent her mighty lord. 124

XXXII.

Go, mortals ! now, and vex yourselves in vain
 For wealth which so uncertainly must come ;
 When what was brought so far, and with such pain,
 Was only kept to lose it nearer home. 128

XXXIII.

The son who, twice three months on th' ocean tost,
 Prepar'd to tell what he had pass'd before,
 Now sees, in English ships, the Holland coast,
 And parents' arms in vain stretch'd from the shore. 132

XXXIV.

This careful husband had been long away,
 Whom his chaste wife and little children mourn ;
 Who on their fingers learn to tell the day
 On which their father promis'd to return. 136

XXXV.

Such are * the proud designs of human kind ;
 And so we suffer shipwreck every where !
 Alas ! what port can such a pilot find,
 Who in the night of fate must blindly steer ? 140

XXXVI.

The undistinguish'd seeds of good and ill
 Heaven in his bosom from our knowledge hides,
 And draws them in contempt of human skill,
 Which oft for friends mistaken foes provides. 144

XXXVII.

Let Munster's prelate ever be accurst,
 In whom we seek the German faith † in vain :
 Alas ! that he should teach the English first,
 That fraud and av'rice in the church could reign. 148

XXXVIII.

Happy, who never trust a stranger's will,
 Whose friendship's in his int'rest understood !
 Since money giv'n but tempts him to be ill,
 When power is too remote to make him good. 152

* *Such are, &c.*] From Petronius ; “ si bene calculum ponas, ubique fit naufragium.

† *The German Faith.*] Tacitus saith of them, “ Nullos mortalium fide aut armis ante Germanos esse.

XXXIX.

Till now alone the mighty nations strove ;
 The rest at gaze without the lists did stand :
 And threatening France, plac'd like a painted Jove,
 Kept idle thunder in his lifted hand. 15

XL.

That eunuch-guardian of rich Holland's trade,
 Who envies us what he wants power t' enjoy ;
 Whose noiseful valour does no foe invade,
 And weak assistance will his friends destroy. 160

XLI.

Offended that we fought without his leave,
 He takes this time his secret hate to shew ;
 Which Charles does with a mind so calm receive,
 As one that neither seeks nor shuns his foe. 164

XLII.

With France, to aid the Dutch, the Danes unite ;
 France as their tyrant, Denmark as their slave :
 But when, with one, three nations join to fight,
 They silently confess that one more brave. 168

XLIII.

Lewis had chas'd the English from his shore ;
 But Charles the French as subjects does invite ;
 Would Heaven for each some Solomon restore,
 Who by their mercy may decide their right. 172

XLIV.

Were subjects so but only by their choice,
 And not from birth did forc'd dominion take,
 Our prince alone would have the public voice, 175
 And all his neighbours' realms would desarts make.

XLV.

He, without fear, a dang'rous war pursues,
 Which without rashness he began before.
 As honour made him first the danger chuse,
 So still he makes it good on virtue's score. 180

XLVI.

The doubled charge his subjects' love supplies,
 Who in that bounty to themselves are kind :
 So glad Egyptians see their Nilus rise,
 And in his plenty their abundance find. 184

XLVII.

With equal power he does two chiefs create,
Two such, as each seem'd worthiest when alone ;
Each able to sustain a nation's fate,
Since both had found a greater in their own. 188

XLVIII.

Both great in courage, conduct, and in fame,
Yet neither envious of the other's praise ;
Their duty, faith, and interest to the same,
Like mighty partners equally they raise. 192

XLIX.

The Prince long time had courted Fortune's love,
But once possess'd did absolutely reign :
Thus with their Amazons the heroes strove, 125
And conquered first those beauties they would gain.

L.

The Duke beheld, like Scipio, with disdain,
That Carthage which he ruin'd rise once more,
And shook aloft the fasces of the main,
To fright those slaves with what they felt before. 200

LI.

Together to the wat'ry camp they haste,
Whom matrons, passing, to their children shew :
Infants' first vows for them to heaven are cast,
And future people* bless them as they go. 204

LII.

With them no riotous pomp, nor Asian train,
T' infect a navy with their gaudy fears ;
To make slow fights, and victories but vain,
But war, severely, like itself, appears. 208

LIII.

Diffusive of themselves, where'er they pass,
They make that warmth in others they expect :
Their valour works like bodies on a glass,
And does its image on their men project. 212

LIV.

Our fleet divides, and straight the Dutch appear,
In number, and a fam'd commander, bold ;

* *Future People.*] "Examina infantium futurisque populus." Plin. Jun.
in Paneg. ad. Traj.

The narrow seas can scarce their navy bear,
Or crowded vessels can their soldiers hold. 216

LV.

The Duke, less num'rous, but in courage more,
On wings of all the winds to combat flies:
His murd'ring guns a loud defiance roar,
And bloody crosses on his flagstaffs rise. 220

LVI.

Both furl their sails, and strip them for the fight;
Their folded sheets dismiss the useless air:
Th' Elian plains could boast no nobler fight,
When struggling champions did their bodies bare. 224

LVII.

Borne each by other in a distant line,
The sea-built forts in dreadful order move;
So vast the noise, as if not fleets did join,
But lands unfix'd*, and floating nations strove. 228

LVIII.

Now pass'd, on either side they nimbly tack;
Both strive to intercept and guide the wind,
And in its eye more closely they come back
To finish all the deaths they left behind. 232

LIX.

On high-rais'd decks the haughty Belgians ride,
Beneath whose shade our humble frigates go:
Such port the el'phant bears, and so defy'd
By the rhinoc'ros, her unequal foe. 236

LX.

And as the built, so diff'rent is the fight;
Their mounting shot is on our sails design'd:
Deep in their hulls our deadly bullets light,
And thro' the yielding planks a passage find. 240

LXI.

Our dreaded Admiral from far they threat,
Whose batter'd rigging their whole war receives:
All bare, like some old oak which tempests beat,
He stands, and sees below his scatter'd leaves. 244

* *Lands unfix'd.*] From Virgil. "Credas inare revulsas Cycladas," &c.

LXII.

Heroes of old, when wounded, shelter sought ;
But he, who meets all danger with disdain,
E'en in their face his ship to anchor brought,
And, steeple-high, stood propp'd upon the main. 248

LXIII.

At this excess of courage, all amaz'd,
The foremost of his foes a while withdraw :
With such respect in enter'd Rome they gaz'd,
Who on high chairs the godlike fathers saw. 252

LXIV.

And now, as where Patroclus' body lay,
Here Trojan chiefs advanc'd, and there the Greeks ;
Ours o'er the Duke their pious wings display,
And theirs the noblest spoils of Britain seek. 256

LXV.

Mean-time his busy mariners be hastes,
His shatter'd sails with rigging to restore,
And willing pines ascend his broken masts,
Whose lofty heads rise higher than before. 260

LXVI.

Straight to the Dutch he turns his dreadful prow,
More fierce th' important quarrel to decide :
Like swans, in long array his vessels show,
Whose crests advancing do the waves divide. 264

LXVII.

They charge, recharge, and all along the sea
They drive, and squander the huge Belgian fleet :
Berkley alone, who nearest danger lay,
Did a like fate with lost Creusa meet. 268

LXVIII.

The night comes on, we eager to pursue
The combat still, and they asham'd to leave ;
Till the last streaks of dying day withdrew,
And doubtful moonlight did our rage deceive. 272

LXIX.

In th' English fleet each ship resounds with joy,
And loud applause of their great leader's fame :
In fiery dreams the Dutch they still destroy,
And, slumb'ring, smile at the imagin'd flame. 276

LXX.

Not so the Holland fleet, who, tir'd and done,
Stretch'd on their decks, like weary oxen lie;
Faint sweats all down their mighty members run,
(Vast bulks, which little souls but ill supply.) 280

LXXI.

In dreams they fearful precipices tread,
Or, shipwreck'd, labour to some distant shore;
Or in dark churches walk among the dead;
They wake with horror, and dare sleep no more. 284

LXXII.

The morn they look on with unwilling eyes,
Till from their maintop joyful news they hear
Of ships, which by their mould bring new supplies,
And in their colours Belgian Lions bear. 288

LXXIII.

Our watchful Gen'ral had discern'd from far
This mighty succour, which made glad the foe:
He sigh'd, but, like a father of the war, 291
His face spake hope*, while deep his sorrows flow.

LXXIV.

His wounded men he first sends off to shore,
Never, till now, unwilling to obey:
They not their wounds but want of strength deplore,
And think them happy who with him can stay. 296

LXXV.

Then, to the rest, "Rejoice," said he, "to-day;
" In you the fortune of Great Britain lies:
" Among so brave a people you are they 299
" Whom heav'n has chose to fight for such a prize.

LXXVI.

" If number English courages could quell,
" We should at first have shunn'd, not met, our foes;
" Whose num'rous sails the fearful only tell: 303
" Courage from hearts, and not from numbers, grows."

LXXVII.

He said, nor needed more to say: with haste
To their known stations cheerfully they go;

* *His fate, &c.*] "Spem vultu simulat, premit alio corde dolorem." *Virg.*

And al at once, disdaining to be last,
Solicit ev'ry gale to meet the foe.

308

LXXVIII.

Nor did th' encourag'd Belgians long delay,
But, bold in others, not themselves, they stood;
So thick, our navy scarce could steer their way,
But seem'd to wander in a moving wood.

312

LXXIX.

Our little fleet was now engag'd so far,
That, like the swordfish in the whale, they fought;
The combat only seem'd a civil war,
Till thro' their bowels we our passage wrought.

316

LXXX.

Never had valour, no, not ours, before
Done aught like this upon the land or main,
Where not to be o'ercome was to do more
Than all the conquests former kings did gain.

320

LXXXI.

The mighty ghosts of our great Harrys rose,
And armed Edwards look'd with anxious eyes,
To see this fleet among unequal foes,
By which fate promis'd them their Charles should rise.

323

LXXXII.

Mean-time the Belgians tack upon our rear,
And raking chase-guns thro' our sterns they send:
Close by their fireships, like jackals, appear,
Who on their lions for the prey attend.

328

LXXXIII.

Silent in smoke of cannon they come on,
(Such vapours once did fiery Cacus hide)
In these the height of pleas'd revenge is shown,
Who burn contented by another's side.

332

LXXXIV.

Sometimes, from fighting squadrons of each fleet,
Deceiv'd themselves, or to preserve some friend,
To grappling *Ætnas* on the ocean meet,
And English fires with Belgian flames contend.

336

LXXXV.

Now, at each tack, our little fleet grows less,
And, like maim'd fowl, swim lagging on the main;

The greater loss their numbers scarce confess,
While they lose cheaper than the English gain. 340

LXXXVI.

Have you not seen, when, whistled from the fist,
Some falcon stoops at what her eye design'd,
And with her eagerness the quarry miss'd,
Straight flies at check, and clips it down the wind? 344

LXXXVII.

The dastard crow, that to the wood made wing,
And sees the groves no shelter can afford,
With her loud kaws her craven kind does bring,
Who, safe in numbers, cuff the noble bird. 348 .

LXXXVIII.

Among the Dutch thus Albemarle bid fare :
He could not conquer, and disdain'd to fly :
Past hope of safety, 'twas his latest care,
Like falling Cæsar, decently to die. 352

LXXXIX.

Yet pity did his manly spirit move,
To see those perish who so well had fought ;
And, graciously, with his despair he strove,
Resolv'd to live till he their safety wrought. 356

XC.

Let other Muses write his prosp'rous fate,
Of conquer'd nations tell, and kings restor'd ;
But mine shall sing of his eclips'd estate,
Which, like the sun's, more wonders does afford. 360

XCI.

He drew his mighty frigates all before,
On which the foes his fruitless force employs :
His weak ones deep into his rear he bore,
Remote from guns, as sick men from the noise. 364

XCII.

His fiery cannon did their passage guide,
And following smoke obscur'd them from the foe :
Thus Israel safe from the Egyptians' pride,
By flaming pillars, and by clouds, did go. 368

XCIII.

Elsewhere the Belgian force we did defeat,
But here our courages did theirs subdue ;



But if some one approach to dare his force,
He swings his tail and swiftly turns him round,
With one paw seizes on his trembling Horse,
And with the other tears him to the ground.

Vide Annus Mirabilis Page 33 Verse 97.

So Xenophon once led that fam'd retreat,
Which first the Asian empire overthrew.

372

XCIV.

The foe approach'd; and one, for his bold sin,
Was sunk; as he that touch'd the ark was slain:
The wild waves master'd him, and suck'd him in,
And smiling eddies dimpled on the main.

376

XCV.

This seen, the rest at awful distance stood,
As if they had been there as servants set,
To stay, or to go on, as he thought good,
And not pursue, but wait on his retreat.

380

XCVI.

So Libyan huntsmen, on some sandy plain,
From shady covers rous'd, the lion chase;
The kingly beast roars out with loud disdain,
And slowly moves*, unknowing to give place.

384

XCVII.

But if some one approach to dare his force,
He swings his tail, and swiftly turns him round;
With one paw seizes on his trembling horse,
And with the other tears him to the ground.

388

XCVIII.

Amidst these toils succeeds the balmy night;
Now hissing waters the quench'd guns restore,
And weary waves†, withdrawing from the fight,
Lie lull'd and panting on the silent shore.

392

XCIX.

The moon shone clear on the becalmed flood,
Where, while her beams like glitt'ring silver play,
Upon the deck our careful Gen'ral stood,
And deeply mus'd on the succeeding day.

396

C.

"That happy fun," said he, "will rise again,
"Who twice victorious did our navies see;
"And I alone must view him rise in vain,
"Without one ray of all his star for me.

400

* The simile is Virgil's; "vestigia retro improperata refert," &c.

† Weary waves.] From Statius Sylv.

"Nec trucibus fluviis idem sonus; occidit horror
"Aequoris, antennis maria acclinata quiescunt."

CI.

“ Yet, like an English gen’ral will I die,
 “ And all the ocean make my spacious grave :
 “ Women and cowards on the land may lie ;
 “ The sea’s a tomb that’s proper for the brave.” 404

CII.

Restless he pass’d the remnant of the night,
 Till the fresh air proclaim’d the morning nigh,
 And burning ships, the martyrs of the fight,
 With paler fires behold the eastern sky. 408

CIII.

But now, his stores of ammunition spent,
 His naked valour is his only guard :
 Rare thunders are from his dumb cannons sent,
 And solitary guns are scarcely heard. 412

CIV.

Thus far had fortune pow’r, he forc’d to stay,
 Nor longer durst with virtue be at strife :
 This as a ransom Albemarle did pay
 For all the glories of so great a life. 416

CV.

For now brave Rupert from afar appears,
 Whose waving streamers the glad Gen’ral knows :
 With full-spread sails his eager navy steers,
 And ev’ry ship in swift proportion grows. 420

CVI.

The anxious Prince had heard the cannon long,
 And from that length of time dire omens drew
 Of English overmatch’d, and Dutch too strong,
 Who never fought three days but to pursue. 424

CVII.

Then as an eagle, who, with pious care,
 Was beating widely on the wing for prey,
 To her now silent ciry does repair,
 And finds her callow infants forc’d away : 428

CVIII.

Stung with her love, she stoops along the plain,
 The broken air loud whistling as she flies :
 She stops, and listens, and shoots forth again,
 And guides her pinions by her young one’s cries. 432

CIX.

With such kind passion hastes the Prince to fight,
 And spreads his flying canvass to the sound :
 Him, whom no danger, were he there, could fright,
 Now absent, ev'ry little noise can wound. 436

CX.

As in a drought the thirsty creatures cry,
 And gape upon the gather'd clouds for rain,
 And first the marlet meets it in the sky,
 And with wet wings, joys all the feather'd train. 440

CXI.

With such glad hearts did our despairing men,
 Salute th' appearance of the Prince's fleet ;
 And each ambitiously would claim the ken
 That with first eyes did distant safety meet. 444

CXII.

The Dutch who came like greedy hinds before,
 To reap the harvest their ripe ears did yield,
 Now look like those, when rolling thunders roar,
 And sheets of lightning blast the standing field. 448

CXIII.

Full in the Princes passage hills of sand,
 And dang'rous flats, in secret ambush lay,
 Where the false tides skim o'er the cover'd land,
 And seamen with dissembled depths betray. 452

CXIV.

The wily Dutch, who, like fall'n angels, fear'd
 This new Messiah's coming, there did wait,
 And round the verge their braving vessels steer'd,
 To tempt his courage with so fair a bait. 456

CXV.

But he, unmov'd, contemns their idle threat,
 Secure of fame whene'er he pleas'd to fight :
 His cold experience tempers all his heat,
 And inbred worth doth boasting valour slight. 460

CXVI.

Heroic virtue did his actions guide,
 And he the substance, not the appearance chose :
 To rescue one such friend he took more pride,
 Than to destroy whole thousands of such foes. 464

CXVII.

But when approach'd, in strict embraces bound,
 Rupert and Albermarle together grow,
 He joys to have his friend in safety found,
 Which he to none but to that friend would owe. 468

CXVIII.

The cheerful soldiers, with new stores supply'd,
 Now long to execute their spleenful will;
 And, in revenge for those three days they try'd,
 Wish one, like Joshua's, when the sun stood still. 472

CXIX.

Thus reforc'd, against the adverse fleet,
 Still doubling ours, brave Rubert leads the way;
 With the first blushes of the morn they meet,
 And bring night back upon the new born day. 476

CXX.

His presence soon blows up the kindling fight,
 And his loud guns speak thick like angry men:
 It seem'd as Slaughter had been breath'd all night,
 And Death new pointed his dull dart again. 480

CXXI.

The Dutch too well his mighty conduct knew,
 And matchless courage, since the former fight;
 Whose navy like a stiff-stretch'd cord did shew,
 Till he bore in and bent them into flight. 484

CXXII.

The wind he shares, while half their fleet offends
 His open side, and high above him shows;
 Upon the rest at pleasure he descends,
 And, doubly harm'd, he double harms bestows. 488

CXXIII.

Behind, the gen'ral mends his weary pace,
 And sullenly to his revenge he fails:
 So glides * some trodden serpent on the grass,
 And long behind his wounded volume trails. 492

* *So glides, &c.*) From Virgil.

“Quum mediū nexus extremæque agmina caudæ

“solvuntur; tardosque trahit sinus ultimus orbes.”

CXXIV.

Th' increasing sound is borne to either shore,
 And for their stakes the throwing nations fear :
 Their passions double with the cannon's roar,
 And with warm wishes each man combats there. 496

CXXV.

Ply'd thick and close as when the fight begun,
 Their huge unwieldy navy wastes away :
 So sicken weaning moons too near the sun,
 And blunt their crescents on the edge of day. 500

CXXVI.

And now reduc'd on equal terms to fight,
 Their ships like wasted patrimonies show,
 Where the thin scatt'ring trees admit the light,
 And shun each other's shadows as they grow. 504

CXXVII.

The warlike Prince had sever'd from the rest
 Two giant ships, the pride of all the main,
 Which with his one so vigorously he press'd,
 And flew so home, they could not rise again. 508

CXXVIII.

Already batter'd, by his lee they lay :
 In vain upon the passing winds they call ;
 The passing winds thro' their torn canvass play,
 And flagging sails on heartless sailors fall. 512

CXXIX.

Their open'd sides receive a gloomy light,
 Dreadful as day let into shades below ;
 Without grim Death rides barefac'd in their fight,
 And urges ent'ring billows as they flow. 516

CXXX.

When one dire shot, the last they could supply,
 Close by the board the Prince's mainmast bore :
 All three, now helpless, by each other lie,
 And this offends not, and those fear no more. 520

CXXXI.

So have I seen some fearful hare maintain
 A course, till tir'd before the dog she lay ;
 Who, stretch'd behind her, pants upon the plain,
 Past pow'r to kill as she to get away. 24

CXXXII.

With his loll'd tongue he faintly licks his prey ;
 His warm breath blows her flix up as she lies ;
 She trembling creeps upon the ground away,
 And looks back to him with beseeching eyes. 528

CXXXIII.

The Prince unjustly does his stars accuse,
 Which hinder'd him to push his fortune on ;
 For what they to his courage did refuse
 By mortal valour never must be done. 532

CXXXIV.

This lucky hour the wise Batavian takes,
 And warns his tatter'd fleet to follow home,
 Proud to have so got off with equal stakes,
 Where 'twas a triumph not to be o'ercome.* 536

CXXXV.

The general's force, as kept alive by flight,
 Now not oppos'd, no longer can pursue ;
 Lasting till heav'n had done his courage right ;
 When he had conquer'd he his weakness knew. 540

CXXXVI.

He casts a frown on the departing foe,
 And sighs to see him quit the wat'ry field :
 His stern fix'd eyes no satisfaction show,
 For all the glories which the fight did yield. 544

CXXXVII.

Tho', as when fiends did miracles avow,
 He stands confess'd e'en by the boastful Dutch ;
 He only does his conquest disavow,
 And thinks too little what they found too much. 548

CXXXVIII.

Return'd, he with the fleet resolv'd to stay :
 No tender thoughts of home his heart divide ;
 Domestic joys and cares he puts away ;
 For realms are households which the great must guide. 552

CXXXIX.

By those who unripe veins in mines explore,
 On the rich bed again the warm turf lay,

* "Quos opimus fallere et effugere est triumphus." Hor.

Till time digests the yet imperfect ore,
And know it will be gold another day: 556

CXL.

So looks our monarch on this early fight,
Th' essay and rudiments of great success,
Which all-maturing time must bring to light, 559
Which he, like heav'n, does each day's labour bleis.

CXLI.

Heav'n ended not the first or second day,
Yet each was perfect to the work design'd;
God and kings' work, when they their works survey,
A passive aptness in all subjects find. 564

CXLII.

In burden'd vessels, first, with speedy care,
His plenteous stores do season'd timber send;
Thither the brawny carpenters repair,
And as the surgeons of maim'd ships attend. 568

CXLIII.

With cord and canvass from rich Hamburg sent,
His navies' molted wings he imp's once more;
Tall Norway fir their masts in battle spent,
And English oaks sprung leaks and planks restore. 572

CXLIV.

All hands employ'd, the royal work grows warm: *
Like lab'ring bees on a long summer's day,
Some sound the trumpet for the rest to swarm,
And some on bells of tasted lilies play. 576

CXLV.

With glewy wax some new foundations lay
Of virgin-combs, which from the roof are hung;
Some arm'd within doors upon duty stay,
Or tend the sick, or educate the young. 580

CXLVI.

So here, some pick out bullets from the sides,
Some drive old okum thro' each seam and rift:
Their left hand does the calking iron guide,
The rattling mallet with the right they lift. 584

* "Fervet opus." The same similitude in Virgil.

CXLVII.

With boiling pitch another near at hand,
 (From friendly Sweden brought) the seams instops;
 Which, well paid o'er, the salt sea waves withstand,
 And shakes them from the rising beak in drops. 588

CXLVIII.

Some the gall'd ropes with dauby marling bind,
 Or searcloth masts with strong tarpawling coats:
 To try new shrouds one mounts into the wind,
 And one below their ease or stiffness notes. 592

CXLIX.

Our careful monarch stands in person by,
 His new-cast cannons' firmness to explore;
 The strength of big-corn'd powder loves to try,
 And ball and cartridge forts for ev'ry bore. 596

CL.

Each day brings fresh supplies of arms and men,
 And ships which all last winter were abroad;
 And such as fitted since the fight had been,
 Or new from stocks had fall'n into the road. 600

CLI.

The goodly London in her gallant trim,
 The Phoenix, daughter of the vanish'd old,
 Like a rich bride does to the ocean swim,
 And on her shadow rides in floating gold. 604

CLII.

Her flag aloft spread ruffling to the wind,
 And sanguine streamers seem the flood to fire:
 The weaver, charm'd with what his loom design'd,
 Goes on to sea, and knows not to retire. 608

CLIII.

With roomy decks, her guns of mighty strength,
 Whose low laid mouths each mounting billow laves:
 Deep in her draught and warlike in her length,
 She seems a sea wasp flying on the waves. 612

CLIV.

This martial present, piously design'd,
 The loyal city gave their best-lov'd king;
 And with a bounty ample as the wind,
 Built, fitted, and maintain'd, to aid him bring. 616

CLV.

By viewing Nature, Nature's handmaid, Art
 Makes mighty things from small beginnings grow:
 Thus fishes first to shipping did impart,
 Their tail the rudder and their head the prow. 620

CLVI.

Some log perhaps upon the waters swam,
 An useless drift, which rudely cut within,
 And hollow'd, first a floating trough became,
 And cross some riv'let passage did begin. 624

CLVII.

In shipping such as this the Irish kern,
 And untaught Indian, on the stream did glide,
 Ere sharp keel'd boats to stem the flood did learn,
 Or fin-like oars did spread from either side. 628

CLVIII.

Add but a sail, and Saturn so appeared,
 When from lost empire he to exile went,
 And with the Golden Age to Tiber steer'd,
 Where coin and commerce first he did invent. 632

CLIX.

Rude as their ship was navigation then,
 No useful compass or meridian known;
 Coasting, they kept the land within their ken,
 And knew no north but when the polestar shone. 636

CLX.

Of all who since have us'd the open sea,
 Than the bold English none more fame have won:
 Beyond the year, and out of heav'n's high way*
 They make discoveries where they see no sun. 640

CLXI.

But what so long in vain, and yet unknown,
 By poor mankind's benighted wit is sought,
 Shall in this age to Britain first be shown,
 And hence be to admiring nations taught. 644

CLXII.

The ebbs of tides, and their mysterious flow,
 We as art's elements shall understand,

* "Extra anni solisque via . . . Virg.

And as by line upon the ocean go,
Whose path shall be familiar as the land.

648

CLXIII.

Instructed ships shall sail to quick commerce,
By which remotest regions are ally'd ;
Which makes one city of the universe,
Where some may gain, and all may be supply'd.

652

CLXIV.

Then we upon our globes last verge shall go,
And view the ocean leaning on the sky ;
From thence our rolling neighbours we shall know,
And on the lunar world securely pry.

656

CLXV.

This I foretel, from your auspicious care,
Who great in search of God and nature grow ;
Who best your wise Creator's praise declare,
Since best to praise his works is best to know.

660

CLXVI.

O truly royal ! who behold the law
And rule of beings in your Maker's mind ;
And thence, like limbecs, rich ideas draw,
To fit the levell'd use of humankind.

664

CLXVII.

But first the toils of war we must endure,
And from th' injurious Dutch redeem the seas :
War makes the valiant of his right secure,
And gives up fraud to be chastised with ease.

668

CLXVIII.

Already were the Belgians on our coast,
Whose fleet more mighty ev'ry day became
By late success, which they did falsely boast,
And now, by first appearance, seem'd to claim.

672

CLXIX.

Designing, subtle, diligent, and close,
They knew to manage war with wise delay ;
Yet all those arts their vanity did cross,
And by their pride their prudence did betray.

676

CLXX.

Nor staid the English long ; but well supply'd,
Appear as num'rous as the insulting foe ;

The combat now by courage must be try'd,
And the success the braver nation show.

680

CLXXI.

There was the Plymouth squadron now come in,
Which in the Streights last winter was abroad;
Which twice on Biscay's working bay had been,
And on the midland sea the French had aw'd.

684

CLXXII.

Old expert Allen, loyal all along,
Fam'd for his action on the Smyrna fleet;
And Holmes, whose name shall live in epic song,
While music numbers, or while verse has feet.

688

CLXXIII.

Holmes! the Achates of the gen'ral's fight,
Who first bewitch'd our eyes with Guinea gold,
As once old Cato in the Romans' fight
The tempting fruits of Afric did unfold.

692

CLXXIV.

With him went Sprag, as bountiful as brave,
Whom his high courage to command had brought;
Harman, who did the twice-fir'd Harry save,
And in his burning ship undaunted fought.

696

CLXXV.

Young Hollis, on a muse by Mars begot,
Born, Cæsar-like, to write and act great deeds;
Impatient to revenge his fatal shot,
His right hand doubly to his left succeeds.

700

CLXXVI.

Thousands were there in darker fame that dwell,
Whose deeds some nobler poem shall adorn;
And, tho' to me unknown, they sure fought well
Whom Rupert led, and who were British born.

704

CLXXVII.

Of ev'ry size an hundred fighting sail:
So vast the navy now at anchor rides,
That underneath it the press'd waters fail,
And with its weight it shoulders off the tides.

708

CLXXVIII.

Now anchor's weigh'd, the seamen shout so shrill,
That heav'n and earth and the wide ocean rings;

A breeze from westward waits their sails to fill,
And rests in those high beds his downy wings. 712

CLXXIX.

The wary Dutch this gathering storm foresaw,
And durst not bide it on the English coast;
Behind their treach'rous shallows they withdraw,
And there lay snares to catch the British host. 716

CLXXX.

So the false spider, when her nets are spread,
Deep ambush'd in her silent den does lie,
And feels far off the trembling of her thread,
Whose filmy cord should bind the struggling fly. 720

CLXXXI.

Then if at last she find him fast beset,
She issues forth and runs along her loom;
She joys to touch the captive in her net,
And drags the little wretch in triumph home. 724

CLXXXII.

The Belgian's hop'd that in disorder'd haste
Our deep-cut keels upon the sands might run;
Or, if with caution leisurely were past,
Their num'rous grofs might charge us one by one. 728

CLXXXIII.

But with a fore-wind pushing them above,
And swelling tide that heav'd them from below,
O'er the blind flats our warlike squadrons move.
And with spread sails to welcome battle go. 732

CLXXXIV.

It seem'd as there the British Neptune stood,
With all his hosts of waters at command,
Beneath them to submit th' officious flood,
And with his trident shov'd them off the sand*. 736

CLXXXV.

To the pale foes they suddenly draw near,
And summon them to unexpected fight:
They start like murderers when ghosts appear,
And draw their curtains in the dead of night. 740

*-----"levat ipse tridenti,
"Et vastas aperit fyrtes," &c.

CLXXXVI.

Now van to van the foremost squadrons meet,
The midmost battles hast'ning up behind;
Who view far off the storm of falling fleet,
And hear their thunder rattling in the wind. 744

CLXXXVII.

At length the adverse admirals appear,
The two bold champions of each country's right;
Their eyes describe the lists as they come near,
And draw the lines of death before they fight. 748

CLXXXVIII.

The distance judg'd for shot of ev'ry size,
The linestocks touch, the pond'rous ball expires;
The vig'rous seamen ev'ry porthole plies,
And adds his heart to ev'ry gun he fires. 752

CLXXXIX.

Fierce was the fight on the proud Belgians' side,
For honour, which they seldom sought before;
But now they by their own vain boasts were ty'd,
And forc'd, at least in shew, to prize it more. 756

CXC.

But sharp remembrance on the English part,
And shame of being match'd by such a foe,
Rouse conscious virtue up in ev'ry heart,
And seeming to be stronger makes them so.* 760

CXCI.

Nor long the Belgians could that fleet sustain
Which did two gen'ral's fates and Cæsar's bear;
Each several ship a victory did gain,
As Rupert or as Albemarle were there. 764

CXCII.

Their batter'd admiral too soon withdrew,
Unthank'd by ours for his unfinish'd fight:
But he the minds of his Dutch masters knew, 767
Who call'd that Providence which we call'd flight:

CXCIII.

Never did men more joyfully obey,
Or sooner understood the sign to fly:

* "Possunt, quia posse videntur."

Virg.

With such alacrity they bore away,
As if to praise them all the States stood by. 772

CXCIV.

O famous Leader of the Belgian fleet !
Thy monument inscrib'd such praise shall wear,
As Varro, timely flying, once did meet,
Because he did not of his Rome despair. 776

CXCIV.

Behold that navy which, a while before,
Provok'd the tardy English close to fight,
Now draw their beaten vessels close to shore,
As larks lie dar'd to shun the hobbies' flight. 780

CXCVI.

Whoe'er would English monuments survey,
In other records may our courage know ;
But let them hide the story of this day,
Whose fame was blemish'd by too base a foe. 784

CXCVII.

Or if too busily they will inquire
Into a victory which we disdain,
Then let them know the Belgians did retire
Before the patron saint of injur'd Spain. 788

CXCVIII.

Repenting England this revengeful day
To Philip's manes did an off'ring bring ;
England, which first by leading them astray,
Hatch'd up rebellion to destroy her king. 792

CXCIX.

Our fathers bent their baneful industry
To check a monarchy that slowly grew ;
But did not France or Holland's fate foresee,
Whose rising pow'r to swift dominion flew. 796

CC.

In Fortune's empire blindly thus we go,
And wander after pathless Destiny ;
Whose dark resorts since Prudence cannot know,
In vain it would provide for what shall be. 800

CCI.

But whate'er English to the bless'd shall go,
And the fourth Harry or first Orange meet,

Find him disowning of a Bourbon foe,
And him detesting a Batavian fleet.

804

CCII.

Now on their coasts our conqu'ring navy rides,
Way lays their merchants, and their land besets;
Each day new wealth without their care provides;
They lie asleep with prizes in their nets.

808

CCIII.

So close behind some promontory lie
The huge leviathans t'attend their prey,
And give no chase, but swallow in the fry,
Which thro' their gaping jaws mistake the way.

812

CCIV.

Nor was this all; in ports and roads remote
Destructive fires among whole fleets we send;
Triumphant flames upon the waters float,
And outbound ships at home their voyage end.

816

CCV.

Those various squadrons variously design'd,
Each vessel freighted with a sev'ral load,
Each squadron waiting for a sev'ral wind,
All find but one to burn them in the road.

820

CCVI.

Some bound for Guinea, golden sand to find,
Bore all the gaudes the simple natives wear;
Some for the pride of Turkish courts design'd,
For folded turbans finest holland bear.

824

CCVII.

Some English wool, vex'd in a Belgian loom,
And into cloth of spungy softness made,
Did into France or colder Denmark doom,
To ruin with worse ware our staple trade.

828

CCVIII.

Our greedy seamen rummage ev'ry hold,
Smile on the booty of each wealthier chest;
And as the priests, who with their gods make bold,
Take what they like, and sacrifice the rest.

832

CCIX.

But, ah! how insincere are all our joys!
Which, sent from Heav'n, like lightning make no stay

Their palling taste the journey's length destroys,
Or Grief, sent post, o'ertakes them on the way. 836

CCX.

Swell'd with our late successes on the foe,
Which France and Holland wanted pow'r to cross,
We urge an unseen fate to lay us low,
And feed their envious eyes with English loss. 840

CCXI.

Each element his dread command obeys,
Who makes or ruins with a smile or frown;
Who, as by one he did our nation raise,
So now he with another pulls us down. 844

CCXII.

Yet, London, Empress of the Northern clime,
By an high fate thou greatly didst expire;
Great as the world's, which, as the death of Time*,
Must fall, and rise a noble frame by fire. 848

CCXIII.

As when some dire usurper Heav'n provides
To scourge his country with a lawless sway,
His birth perhaps some petty village hides,
And sets his cradle out of Fortune's way: 852

CCXIV.

Till fully ripe, his swelling fate breaks out,
And hurries him to mighty mischiefs on:
His prince, surpris'd at first, no ill could doubt,
And wants the pow'r to meet it when 'tis known. 856

CCXV.

Such was the rise of this prodigious' fire,
Which in mean buildings first obscurely bred,
From thence did soon to open streets aspire,
And straight to palaces and temples spread. 860

CCXVI.

The diligence of Trade, and noiseful Gain,
And Luxury, more late, asleep were laid:
All was the Night's, and, in her silent reign,
No sound the rest of Nature did invade. 864

* "Quum mare quum tellus, correptaque regia cæli
eat," &c.

CCXVII.

In this deep quiet, from what source unknown,
 Those seeds of fire their fatal birth disclose ;
 And, first, few scatt'ring sparks above were blown,
 Big with the flames that to our ruin rose. 868

CCXVIII.

Then in some close-pent room it crept along,
 And, mould'ring as it went, in silence fed ;
 Till th' infant monster, with devouring strong,
 Walk'd boldly upright with exalted head. 872

CCXIX.

Now, like some rich or mighty murderer,
 Too great for prison which he breaks with gold ;
 Who fresher for new mischiefs does appear,
 And dares the world to tax him with the old: 876

CCXX.

So 'scapes th' insulting fire his narrow jail,
 And makes small outlets into open air ;
 There the fierce winds his tender force assail,
 And bet him downward to his first repair. 880

CCXXI.

The winds, like crafty courtezans,* withheld
 His flames from burning, but to blow them more ;
 And ev'ry fresh attempt he is repell'd
 With faint denials, weaker than before. 884

CCXXII.

And now, no longer letted of his prey,
 He leaps up at it with enrag'd desire :
 O'erlooks the neighbours with a wide survey,
 And nods at ev'ry house his threat'ning fire. 888

CCXXIII.

The ghosts of traitors from the bridge descend,
 With bold fanatic spectres to rejoice ;
 About the fire into a dance they bend,
 And sing their sabbath notes with feeble voice. 892

CCXXIV.

Our guardian angel saw them where they sat
 Above the palace of our slumb'ring King ;

* *Like crafty, &c.*) "Hac arte tractabat cupidum virum "ut illius
 animus inopia accenderet."

He sigh'd, abandoning his charge to Fate,
And, drooping, oft look'd back upon the wing. 896

CCXXV.

At length the crackling noise and dreadful blaze
Call'd up some waking lover to the fight;
And long it was ere he the rest could raise,
Whose heavy eyelids yet were full of night. 900

CCXXVI.

The next to danger, hot pursu'd by Fate,
Half-cloth'd, half-naked, hastily retire;
And frighted mothers strike their breasts, too late,
For helpless infants left amidst the fire. 904

CCXXVII.

Their cries soon waken all the dwellers near;
Now murm'ring noises rise in ev'ry street:
The more remote run stumbling with their fear,
And in the dark men jostle as they meet. 908

CCXXVIII.

So weary bees in little cells repose,
But if night robbers lift the well-stor'd hive,
An humming thro' their waxen city grows,
And out upon each other's wings they drive. 912

CCXXIX.

Now streets grow throng'd and busy as by day:
Some run for buckets to the hollow'd quire;
Some cut the pipes, and some the engines play,
And some, more bold, mount ladders to the fire. 916

CCXXX.

In vain: for from the east a Belgian wind
His hostile breath thro' the dry rafters sent:
The flames, impell'd soon left their foes behind,
And forward, with a wanton fury, went. 920

CCXXXI.

A key of fire ran all along the shore,
And lighten'd all the river with a blaze*;
The waken'd tides began again to roar.
And wond'ring fish in shining waters gaze. 924

* *Sigæa igni freta lata relucet.*

CCXXXII.

Old Father Thames rais'd up his rev'rend head,
But fear'd the fate of Simois would return;
Deep in his ooze he sought his sedgy bed,
And shrunk his waters back into his urn. 928

CCXXXIII.

The fire, mean-time, walks in a broader grofs,
To either hand his wings he opens wide;
He wades the streets, and straight he reaches crofs,
And plays his longing flames on th' other side. 932

CCXXXIV.

And first they warm, then scorch, and then they take;
Now with long necks from side to side they feed;
At length, grown strong, their mother fire forsake,
And a new colony of flames succeed. 936

CCXXXV.

To ev'ry nobler portion of the Town
The curling billows roll their restless tide!
In parties now they straggle up and down,
As armies, unoppos'd, for prey divide. 940

CCXXXVI.

One mighty squadron, with a side-wind sped,
Thro' narrow lanes his cumber'd fire does haste,
By pow'rful charms of gold and silver led,
The Lombard bankers and the Change to waste. 944

CCXXXVII.

Another backward to the Tow'r would go,
And slowly eats his way against the wind;
But the main body of the marching foe
Against th' imperial palace is design'd. 948

CCXXXVIII.

Now day appears, and with the day the King,
Whose early care had robb'd him of his rest;
Far off the cracks of falling houses ring,
And shrieks of subjects pierce his tender breast. 952

CCXXXIX.

Near as he draws, thick harbingers of smoke,
With gloomy pillars, cover all the place,
Whose little intervals of night are broke
By sparks that drive against his sacred face. 959

CCXL.

More than his guards his sorrows made him known,
 And pious tears which down his cheeks did show'r :
 The wretched in his grief forgot their own ;
 So much the pity of a king has pow'r ! 960

CCXLI.

He wept the flames of what he lov'd so well,
 And what so well had merited his love ;
 For never prince in grace did more excel,
 Or royal city more in duty strove. 964

CCXLII.

Nor with an idle care did he behold ;
 (Subjects may grieve, but monarchs must redress)
 He cheers the fearful, and commends the bold,
 And makes despairers hope for good success. 968

CCXLIII.

Himself directs what first is to be done,
 And orders all the succours which they bring :
 The helpful and the good about him run,
 And form an army worthy such a king. 972

CCXLIV.

He sees the dire contagion spread so fast,
 That where it seizes, all relief is vain,
 And therefore must unwillingly lay waste
 That country which would else the foe maintain. 976

CCXLV.

The powder blows up all before the fire :
 Th' amazed flames stand gather'd on a heap,
 And from the precipice's brink retire,
 Afraid to venture on so large a leap. 980

CCXLVI.

Thus fighting fires a while themselves consume,
 But straight, like Turks, forc'd on to win or die,
 They first lay tender bridges of their fume,
 And o'er the breach in unctuous vapours fly. 984

CCXLVII.

Part stay for passage till a gust of wind
 Ships o'er their forces in a shining sheet ;
 Part creeping under ground, their journey blind,
 And climbing from below, their fellows meet. 988

CCXLVIII.

Thus to some desert plain, or old wood side,
Dire night-hags come from far to dance their round,
And o'er broad rivers on their fiends they ride,
Or sweep in clouds above the blasted ground. 992

CCXLIX.

No help avails: for, hydra-like, the fire
Lifts up his hundred heads to aim his way;
And scarce the wealthy can one half retire
Before he rushes in to share the prey. 996

CCL.

The rich grow suppliant, and the poor grow proud;
Those offer mighty gain, and these ask more:
So void of pity is th' ignoble crowd,
When others' ruin may increase their store! 1000

CCLI.

As those who live by shores with joy behold
Some wealthy vessel split or stranded nigh,
And from the rocks leap down for shipwreck'd gold,
And seek the tempests which the others fly: 1004

CCLII.

So these but wait the owners' last despair,
And what's permitted to the flames invade;
E'en from their jaws the hungry morsels tear,
And on their backs the spoils of Vulcan lade. 1008

CCLIII.

The days were all in this lost labour spent;
And when the weary king gave place to night,
His beams he to his royal brother lent,
And so shone still in his reflective light. 1012

CCLIV.

Night came, but without darkness or repose,
A dismal picture of the gen'ral doom!
Where souls distracted when the trumpet blows,
And half unready, with their bodies come. 1016

CCLV.

Those who have homes, when home they do repair,
To a last lodging call their wand'ring friends;
Their short uneasy sleeps are broke with care,
To look how near their own destruction tends. 1020

CCLVI.

Those who have none sit round where once it was,
 And with full eyes each wonted room require;
 Haunting the yet warm ashes of the place,
 As murder'd men walk where they did expire. 1024

CCLVII.

Some stir up coals, and watch the vestal fire,
 Others in vain from sight of ruin run;
 And while thro' burning lab'rinth they retire, 1027
 With loathing eyes repeat what they would shun.

CCLVIII.

The most in fields, like herded beasts, lie down,
 To dews obnoxious, on the grassy floor;
 And while their babes in sleep their sorrows drown,
 Sad parents watch the remnants of their store. 1032

CCLIX.

While by the motion of the flames they guess
 What streets are burning now, and what are near,
 An infant, waking, to the paps would press,
 And meets, instead of milk, a falling tear. 1036

CCLX.

No thought can ease them but their Sov'reign's care,
 Whose praise th' afflicted as their comfort sing:
 E'en those whom want might drive to just despair,
 Think life's a blessing under such a King. 1040

CCLXI.

Mean-time he sadly suffers in their grief,
 Outkeeps an hermit, and outprays a saint:
 All the long night he studies their relief,
 How they may be supply'd and he may want. 1044

CCLXII.

"O God," said he, "thou patron of my days,
 "Guide of my youth in exile and distress!
 "Who me unfriended brought'st, by wondrous ways,
 "The kingdom of my fathers to possess: 1048

CCLXIII.

"Be thou my judge, with what unwearied care
 "I since have labour'd for my people's good,
 "To bind the bruises of a civil war,
 "And stop the issue of their wasting blood! 1052

CCLXIV.

“ Thou, who hast taught me to forgive the ill,
 “ And recompense, as friends, the good misled;
 “ If mercy be a precept of thy will,
 “ Return that mercy on thy servant’s head. 1056

CCLXV.

“ Or, if my heedless youth has stepp’d astray,
 “ Too soon forgetful of thy gracious hand,
 “ On me alone thy just displeasure lay, 1059
 “ But take thy judgments from this mourning land.

CCLXVI.

“ We all have sinn’d, and thou hast laid us low,
 “ As humble earth, from whence at first we came:
 “ Like flying shades before the clouds we show,
 “ And shrink like parchment in consuming flame. 1064

CCLXVII.

“ O let it be enough what thou hast done!
 “ When spotted deaths ran arm’d thro’ ev’ry street,
 “ With poison’d darts, which not the good could shun,
 “ The speedy could outfly, or valiant meet. 1068

CCLXVIII.

“ The living few, and frequent fun’rals then,
 “ Proclaim’d thy wrath on this forsaken place;
 “ And now those few, who are return’d again,
 “ Thy searching judgments to their dwelling trace.

CCLXIX.

“ O pass not, lord, an absolute decree, 1073
 “ Or bind thy sentence unconditional;
 “ But in thy sentence our remorse foresee,
 “ And in that foresight this thy doom recal. 1076

CCLXX.

“ Thy threat’nings, Lord, as thine, thou may’st revoke;
 “ But if immutable and fix’d they stand,
 “ Continue still thyself to give the stroke,
 “ And let not foreign foes oppress thy land.” 1080

CCLXXI.

Th’ eternal heard, and from the heav’nly choir
 Chose out the cherub with the flaming sword,
 And bade him swiftly drive th’ approaching fire
 From where our naval magazines were stor’d. 1084

CCLXXII.

The blessed minister his wings display'd,
 And, like a shooting star, he cleft the night:
 He charg'd the flames, and those that disobey'd
 He lash'd to duty with his sword of light. 1088

CCLXXIII.

The fugitive flames, chastis'd, went forth to prey
 On pious structures, by our fathers rear'd;
 By which to heav'n they did affect the way,
 Ere faith in churchmen without works was heard.

CCLXXIV.

The wanting orphans saw, with wat'ry eyes, 1093
 Their founder's charity in dust laid low,
 And sent to God their ever-answer'd cries,
 For he protects the poor who made them so. 1096

CCLXXV.

Nor could thy fabric, Paul's! defend thee long,
 Tho' thou wert sacred to thy maker's praise;
 Tho' made immortal by a poet's song,
 And poets' songs the Theban walls could raise. 1100

CCLXXVI.

The daring flames peep'd in, and saw from far
 The awful beauties of the sacred quire;
 But, since it was profan'd by civil war,
 Heav'n thought it fit to have it purg'd by fire. 1104

CCLXXVII.

Now down the narrow streets it swiftly came,
 And, widely op'ning, did on both sides prey:
 'This benefit we sadly owe the flame,
 If only ruin must enlarge our way. 1108

CCLXXVIII.

And now four days the sun had seen our woes,
 Four nights the moon beheld th' incessant fire;
 It seem'd as if the stars more sickly rose,
 And farther from the fev'rish north retire. 1112

CCLXXIX.

In th' empyrean heav'n, the blest'd abode,
 The thrones and the dominions prostrate lie,
 Not daring to behold their angry God,
 And an hush'd silence damps the tuneful sky. 1116

CCLXXX.

At length th' Almighty cast a pitying eye,
 And mercy softly touch'd his melting breast;
 He saw the town's one half in rubbish lie,
 And eager flames drive on to storm the rest. 1120

CCLXXXI.

A hollow crystal pyramid he takes,
 In firmamental waters dipt above,
 Of it a broad extinguisher he makes,
 And hoods the flames that to their quarry drove. 1124

CCLXXXII.

The vanquish'd fires withdraw from ev'ry place,
 Or, full with feeding, sink into a sleep:
 Each household genius shews again his face,
 And from the hearths the little lares creep. 1128

CCLXXXIII.

Our King this more than nat'ral change beholds;
 With sober joy his heart and eyes abound;
 To the All-good his lifted hands he folds,
 And thanks him low on his redeemed ground. 1132

CCLXXXIV.

As when sharp frosts had long constrain'd the earth,
 A kindly thaw unlocks it with cold rain.
 And first the tender blade peeps up to birth, 1135
 And straight the green fields laugh with promis'd grain.

CCLXXXV.

By such degrees the spreading gladness grew
 In ev'ry heart, which fear had froze before:
 The standing streets with so much joy they view,
 That with less grief the perish'd they deplore. 1140

CCLXXXVI.

The father of the people open'd wide
 His stores, and all the poor with plenty fed:
 Thus God's anointed God's own place supply'd,
 And fill'd the empty with his daily bread. 1144

CCLXXXVII.

This royal bounty brought its own reward,
 And in their minds so deep did print the sense,
 That if their ruins sadly they regard, 1147
 'Tis but with fear the sight might drive him thence.

CCLXXXVIII.

But so may he live long that town to sway,
Which by his auspice they will nobler make,
As he will hatch their ashes by his stay,
And not their humble ruins now forsake. 1152

CCLXXXIX.

They have not lost their loyalty by fire;
Nor is their courage or their wealth so low,
That from his wars they poorly would retire,
Or beg the pity of a vanquish'd foe. 1156

CCXC.

Not with more constancy the Jews of old,
By Cyrus from rewarded exile sent,
Their royal city did in dust behold,
Or with more vigour to rebuild it went. 1160

CCXCI.

The utmost malice of the stars is past,
And two dire comets, which have scourg'd the town,
In their own plague and fire have breath'd their last,
Or dimly in their sinking sockets frown. 1164

CCXCII.

Now frequent trines the happier lights among,
And high-rais'd Jove from his dark prison freed,
(Those weights took off that on his planet hung)
Will gloriously the new-laid works succeed. 1168

CCXCIII.

Methinks already, from this chymic flame,
I see a city of more precious mould,
Rich as the town which gives the Indies name,
With silver pav'd, and all divine with gold. 1172

CCXCIV.

Already, lab'ring with a mighty fate,
She shakes the rubbish from her mounting brow,
And seems to have renew'd her charter's date,
Which heav'n will to the death of time allow. 1176

CCXCV.

More great than human, now, and more august,
Now deified, she from her fires does rise;
Her wid'ning streets on new foundations trust,
And, op'ning, into larger parts she flies. 1180

CCXCVI.

Before, she like some shepherdes did show,
 Who fate to bathe her by a river's side;
 Not answering to her fame, but rude and low,
 Nor taught the beauteous arts of modern pride. 1184

CCXCVII.

Now, like a maiden queen, she did behold,
 From her high turrets, hourly suitors come:
 The East with incense, and the West with gold,
 Will stand like suppliants to receive her doom. 1188

CCXCVIII.

The silver Thames, her own domestic flood,
 Shall bear her vessels like a sweeping train;
 And often wind, as of his mistress proud,
 With longing eyes to meet her face again. 1192

CCXCIX.

The wealthy Tagus, and the wealthier Rhine,
 The glory of their towns no more shall boast,
 And Seine, that would with Belgian rivers join,
 Shall find her lustre stain'd and traffic lost. 1196

CCC.

The vent'rous merchant, who design'd more far,
 And touches on our hospitable shore,
 Charm'd with the splendour of this northern star,
 Shall here unlade him, and depart no more. 1200

CCCI.

Our pow'rful navy shall no longer meet,
 The wealth of France or Holland to invade;
 The beauty of this town, without a fleet,
 From all the world shall vindicate her trade. 1204

CCCII.

And while this fam'd emporium we prepare,
 The British ocean shall such triumphs boast,
 That those who now disdain our trade to share,
 Shall rob, like pirates, on our wealthy coast. 1208

CCCIII.

Already we have conquer'd half the war,
 And the less dang'rous part is left behind;
 Our trouble now is but to make them dare,
 And not so great to vanquish as to find. 1212

CCCIV.

Thus to the Eastern wealth thro' storms we go,
But now, the Cape once doubled, fear no more;
A constant trade-wind will securely blow,
And gently lay us on the spicy shore.

1216



A POEM ON THE PRINCE,

Born June 10, 1688.

OUR vows are heard by times, and heav'n takes care
To grant before we can conclude the pray'r;
Preventing angels met it half the way,
And sent us back to praise who came to pray.

Just on the day when the high-mounted sun 5
Did farthest in its northen progress run,
He bended forward, and ev'n stretch'd the sphere
Beyond the limits of the lengthen'd year,
To view a brighter sun in Britain born;
That was the bus'ness of his longest morn; 10
The glorious object seen, 'twas time to turn.

Departing Spring could only stay to shed
Her gloomy beauties on the genial bed,
But left the manly Summer in her stead,
With timely fruit the longing land to cheer, 15
And to fulfil the promise of the year.
Betwixt two seasons comes th' auspicious heir,
This age to blossom, and the next to bear.

Last solemn Sabbath saw the church attend,
The Paraclete in fiery pomp descend; 20
But when his wondrous octave roll'd again,
He brought a royal infant in his train.
So great a blessing to so good a king
None but th' Eternal Comforter could bring.

Or did the mighty Trinity conspire, 25
As once in council, to create our fire?
It seems as if they sent the new-born guest
To wait on the procession of their feast,
And on their sacred anniversary decreed
To stamp their image on the promis'd seed. 30
Three realms united, and on one bestow'd,
An emblem of their mystic union show'd;
The mighty trine the triple empire shar'd,
As ev'ry person would have one to guard.

Hail Son of pray'rs! by holy violence 35
Drawn down from heav'n; but long be banish'd thence,

And late to thy paternal skies retire :
 To mend our crimes whole ages would require ;
 To change th' inveterate habit of our sins,
 And finish what thy godlike fire begins.

40

Kind heav'n, to make us Englishmen again,
 No less can give us than a patriarch's reign.

The sacred cradle to your charge receive,
 Ye seraphs ! and by turns the guard relieve,
 Thy father's angel and thy father join

45

To keep possession, and secure the line ;
 But long defer the honours of thy fate ;
 Great may they be like his, like his be late,
 That James his running century may view,
 And give this son an auspice to the new.

50

Our wants exact at least that moderate stay ;
 For see the dragon winged on his way,
 'To watch the travail and devour the prey.
 Or, if allusions may not rise so high,
 'Thus, when Alcides rais'd his infant cry,
 The snakes besieg'd his young divinity ;
 But vainly with their forked tongues they threat,
 For opposition makes a hero great.

55

To needful succour all the good will run,
 And Jove assert the godhead of his son.

60

O still repining at your present state,
 Grudging yourselves the benefits of Fate,
 Look up, and read, in characters of light,
 A blessing sent you in your own despight.
 The manna falls, yet that celestial bread,
 Like Jews you munch, and murmur while you feed ;
 May not your fortune be, like theirs, exil'd,
 Yet forty years to wander in the wild ?
 Or if it be, may Moses live at least
 To lead you to the verge of promis'd rest.

70

Tho' poets are not prophets to foreknow
 What plants will take the blight, and what will grow,
 By tracing heav'n his footsteps may be found :
 Behold ! how awfully he walks the round !
 God is abroad, and wondrous in his ways,
 The rise of empires and their fall surveys :

75



DRYDEN'S POEMS.
 The sacred cradle to your charge receive
 Ye Seraphs! and by turns the guard relieve.
Vide Britannia rediviva. Vol. I. Page 62. Line 44.

Drawn by R. Corbould.

Printed for C. Cooke July 7. 1798.

Engraved by C. Warren.

More (might I say) than with an usual eye
 He sees his bleeding church in ruin lie,
 And hears the souls of saints beneath his altar cry.
 Already has he lifted high the sign 80
 Which crown'd the conqu'ring arms of Constantine;
 The moon grows pale at that presaging sight,
 And half her train of stars have lost their light.

Behold another Sylvester, to bless
 The sacred standard, and secure success; 85
 Large of his treasures, of a soul so great,
 As fills and crowds his universal seat.

Now view at home a second Constantine;
 (The former too was of the British line)
 Has not his healing balm your breaches clos'd 90
 Whose exile many fought, and few oppos'd?
 O! did not heav'n, by its eternal doom,
 Permit those evils that this good might come?
 So manifest, that e'en the moon-ey'd sects
 See whom and what this Providence protects. 95
 Methinks, had we within our minds no more
 Than that one shipwreck on the fatal shore,
 That only thought may make us think again
 What wonders God reserves for such a reign.
 To dream that chance his preservation wrought, 100
 Were to think Noah was preserv'd for nought;
 Or the surviving eight were not design'd
 To people earth, and to restore their kind.

When humbly on the royal babe we gaze,
 The manly lines of a majestic face 105
 Give awful joy: 'tis paradise to look
 On the fair frontispiece of Nature's book:
 If the first op'ning page so charms the sight,
 Think how th' unfolded volume will delight!
 See how the venerable infant lies 110
 In early pomp! how thro' the mother's eyes
 The father's soul, with an undaunted view,
 Looks out, and takes our homage as his due.
 See on his future subjects how he smiles!
 Nor meanly flatters, nor with craft beguiles; 115

But with an open face, as on his throne,
 Assures our birthrights, and assumes his own.
 Born in broad daylight, that th' ungrateful rout
 May find no room for a remaining doubt.
 Truth, which itself is light, does darkness shun, 120
 And the true eaglet safely dares the sun.

Fain would the fiends have made a dubious birth*,
 Loath to confess the Godhead cloath'd in earth;
 But sicken'd after all their baffled lies,
 To find an heir apparent in the skies: 125
 Abandon'd to despair, still may they grudge,
 And owning not the Saviour, prove the Judge.

Not great Æneas† stood in plainer day,
 When the dark mantling mist dissolv'd away,
 He to the Tyrians shew'd his sudden face, 130
 Shining with all his goddess-mother's grace,
 For she herself had made his count'nance bright,
 Breath'd honour on his eyes and her own purple light.

If our victorious Edward, as they say,
 Gave Wales a prince on that propitious day, 135
 Why may not years, revolving with his fate,
 Produce his like, but with a longer date?

One who may carry to a distant shore
 The terror that his fam'd forefather bore.
 But why should James or his young hero stay 140
 For slight presages of a name or day;
 We need no Edward's fortune to adorn
 That happy moment when our prince was born;
 Our prince adorns this day, and ages hence
 Shall wish his birthday for some future prince. 145

Great Michael! prince of all th' ethereal hosts;
 And whate'er inborn saints our Britain boasts;
 And thou th' adopted patron of our isle,
 With cheerful aspects on this infant smile;
 The pledge of heav'n, which, dropping from above,
 Secures our bliss, and reconciles his love. 151

Enough of ills our dire rebellion wrought,
 When to the dregs we drank the bitter draught;

* Alluding to the temptations in the wilderness.

† Virg. Aeneid. I.

Then airy atoms did in plagues conspire,
 Nor did th' avenging angel yet retire, 155
 But purg'd our still-increasing crimes with fire.
 Then perjur'd plots, the still-impending test,
 And worse—but charity conceals the rest.
 Here stop the current of the sanguine flood;
 Require not, gracious God! thy martyr's blood; 160
 But let their dying pangs, their living toil,
 Spread a rich harvest thro' their native soil;
 A harvest rip'ning for another reign,
 Of which this royal babe may reap the grain.

Enough of early saints one womb has giv'n; 165
 Enough increas'd the family of heav'n:
 Let them for his and our atonement go,
 And reigning blest'd above, leave him to rule below.

Enough already has the year foreshow'd;
 His wonted course the sea has overflow'd; 170
 The meads were floated with a weeping spring,
 And frighten'd birds in woods forgot to sing:
 The strong limb'd steed beneath his harness faints,
 And the same shiv'ring sweat his lord attaints.
 When will the minister of wrath give o'er? 175
 Behold him at Arauna's threshing-floor*!
 He stops, and seems to sheath his flaming brand,
 Pleas'd with burnt incense from our David's hand.
 David has brought the Jebusite's abode,
 And rais'd an altar to the living God. 180

Heav'n, to reward him, makes his joys sincere;
 No future ills nor accidents appear
 To sully and pollute the sacred infant's year.
 Five months to discord and debate were giv'n;
 He sanctifies the yet remaining sev'n. 185
 Sabbath of months! henceforth in him be blest'd,
 And prelude to the realm's perpetual rest!

Let his baptismal drops for us atone,
 Lustrations for offences not his own.
 Let conscience, which is int'rest ill disguis'd, 190
 In the same font be cleans'd, and all the land baptiz'd.

* Alluding to the passage in the first book of Kings, chap. xxiv.

Un-nam'd as yet, at least unknown to fame,
 Is there a strife in heav'n about his name,
 Where ev'ry famous predecessor vies,
 And makes a faction for it in the skies ? 195
 Or must it be reserv'd to thought alone ?
 Such was the sacred Tetragrammaton.
 Things worthy silence must not be reveal'd ;
 Thus the true name of Rome was kept conceal'd,
 To shun the spells and forceries of those 200
 Who durst her infant majesty oppose :
 But when his tender strength in time shall rise
 To dare ill tongues and fascinating eyes,
 This isle, which hides the little thunderer's fame,
 Shall be too narrow to contain his name ; 205
 Th' artillery of heav'n shall make him known :
 Crete could not hold the god when Jove was grown.
 As Jove's increase, who from his brain was born,
 Whom arms and arts did equally adorn,
 Free of the breast was bred, whose milky taste 210
 Minerva's name to Venus had debas'd :
 So this imperial babe rejects the food
 That mixes monarchs' with plebeian blood :
 Food that his inborn courage might control,
 Extinguish all the father in his soul, 215
 And for his Estian race, and Saxon strain,
 Might reproduce some second Richard's reign.
 Mildness he shares from both his parents' blood ;
 But kings too tame are despicably good :
 Be this the mixture of this regal child, 220
 By nature manly, but by virtue mild.
 Thus far the furious transport of the news
 Had to prophetic madness fir'd the Muse ;
 Madness ungovernable, uninspir'd,
 Swift to foretel whatever she desir'd. 225
 Was it for me the dark abyss to tread,
 And read the book which angels cannot read ?
 How was I punish'd when the sudden blast,
 The face of heav'n and our young sun o'ercast
 Fame, the swift ill, increasing as she roll'd, 230
 Disease, Despair, and Death, at three reprises told ;

At three insulting strides she stalk'd the town,
 And, like contagion, struck the loyal down.
 Down fell the winnow'd wheat, but mounted high,
 The whirlwind bore the chaff, and hid the sky. 235
 Here black rebellion shooting from below,
 (As earth's gigantic brood by moments grow)
 And here the sons of God are petrify'd with woe:
 An apoplex of grief! so low were driv'n
 The saints as hardly to defend their heav'n. 240

As when pent vapours run their hollow round,
 Earthquakes, which are convulsions of the ground,
 Break bellowing forth, and no confinement brook,
 Till the third settles what the former shook:
 Such heavings had our souls, till, slow and late, 245
 Our life with his return'd, and faith prevailed on fate.
 By pray'rs the mighty blessing was implor'd,
 To pray'rs was granted, and by pray'rs restor'd.

So, ere the Shunammite * a son conceiv'd,
 The prophet promis'd, and the wife believ'd, 250
 A son was sent, the son so much desir'd,
 But soon upon the mother's knees expir'd:
 The troubled seer approach'd the mournful door,
 Ran, pray'd, and sent his pastoral staff before,
 Then stretch'd his limbs upon the child, and mourn'd,
 Till warmth, and breath, and a new soul, return'd. 256

Thus Mercy stretches out her hand, and saves
 Desponding Peter sinking in the waves.

As when a sudden storm of hail and rain
 Beats to the ground the yet unbearded grain, 260
 Think not the hopes of harvest are destroy'd
 On the flat field, and on the naked void;
 The light, unloaded stem, from tempest freed,
 Will raise the youthful honours of his head;
 And, soon restor'd by native vigour, bear 265
 The timely product of the bounteous year.

Nor yet conclude all fiery trials past,
 For heav'n will exercise us to the last;
 Sometimes will check us in our full career,
 With doubtful blessings and with mingled fear; 270

* In the Second Book of Kings, chap. vi.

That, still depending on his daily grace,
 His ev'ry mercy for an alms may pass;
 With sparing hands will diet us to good,
 Preventing surfeits of our pamper'd blood.
 So feeds the mother-bird her craving young 275
 With little morsels, and delays 'em long.

True, this last blessing was a royal feast;
 But where's the wedding-garment on the guest?
 Our manners, as religion were a dream,
 Are such as teach the nations to blaspheme. 280
 In lusts we wallow, and with pride we swell,
 And injuries with injuries repel;
 Prompt to revenge, not daring to forgive,
 Our lives unteach the doctrine we believe.
 Thus Israel sinn'd, impertinently hard, 285
 And vainly thought the present ark their guard;*
 But when the haughty Philistines appear,
 They fled, abandoned to their foes and fear:
 Their God was absent, tho' his ark was there.
 Ah! lest our crimes should snatch this pledge away,
 And make our joys the blessings of a day! 291
 For we have sinn'd him hence, and that he lives,
 God to his promise, not our practice, gives.
 Our crimes would soon weigh down the guilty scale,
 But James, and Mary, and the church prevail: 295
 Nor Amalek can rout the chosen bands,†
 While Hur and Aaron hold up Moses' hands.

By living well let us secure his days,
 Mod'rate in hopes, and humble in our ways.
 No force the freeborn spirit can constrain, 300
 But charity and great examples gain.
 Forgiveness is our thanks for such a day;
 'Tis godlike God in his own coin to pay.
 But you, propitious Queen! translated here,
 From your mild heav'n, to rule our rugged sphere
 Beyond the sunny walks and circling year:
 You, who your native climate have bereft
 Of all the virtues, and the vices left;

* 1 Sam. iv. 10.

† Exod. xvii. 8.

Whom piety and beauty make their boast,
 Tho' beautiful is well in pious lost ; 310
 So lost as starlight is dissolv'd away,
 And melts into the brightness of the day ;
 Or gold about the royal diadem,
 Lost to improve the lustre of the gem :
 What can we add to your triumphant day ? 315
 Let the great gift the beauteous giver pay ;
 For should our thanks awake the rising sun,
 And lengthen as his latest shadows run,
 That, tho' the longest day, would soon, too soon, be done.
 Let angels' voices with their harps conspire, 320
 But keep th' auspicious infant from the choir :
 Late let him sing above, and let us know
 No sweeter music than his cries below.

Nor can I wish to you, great monarch! more
 Than such an annual income to your store. 325
 The day which gave this unit, did not shine
 For a less omen than to fill the trine.

After a prince an admiral beget ;
 The Royal Sovereign wants an anchor yet,
 Our isle has younger titles still in store, 330
 And when th' exhausted land can yield no more,
 Your line can force them from a foreign shore.

The name of Great your martial mind will suit,
 But justice is your darling attribute :
 Of all the Greeks 'twas but one hero's due,* 335
 And in him Plutarch prophesy'd of you :
 A prince's favours but on few can fall,
 But justice is a virtue shar'd by all.

Some kings the name of conq'rors have assum'd,
 Some to be great, some to be gods, presum'd ; 340
 But boundless pow'r and arbitrary lust
 Made tyrants still abhor the name of just ;
 They shunn'd the praise this godlike virtue gives,
 And fear'd a title that reproach'd their lives.

The pow'r from which all kings derive their state,
 Whom they pretend at least to imitate, 346

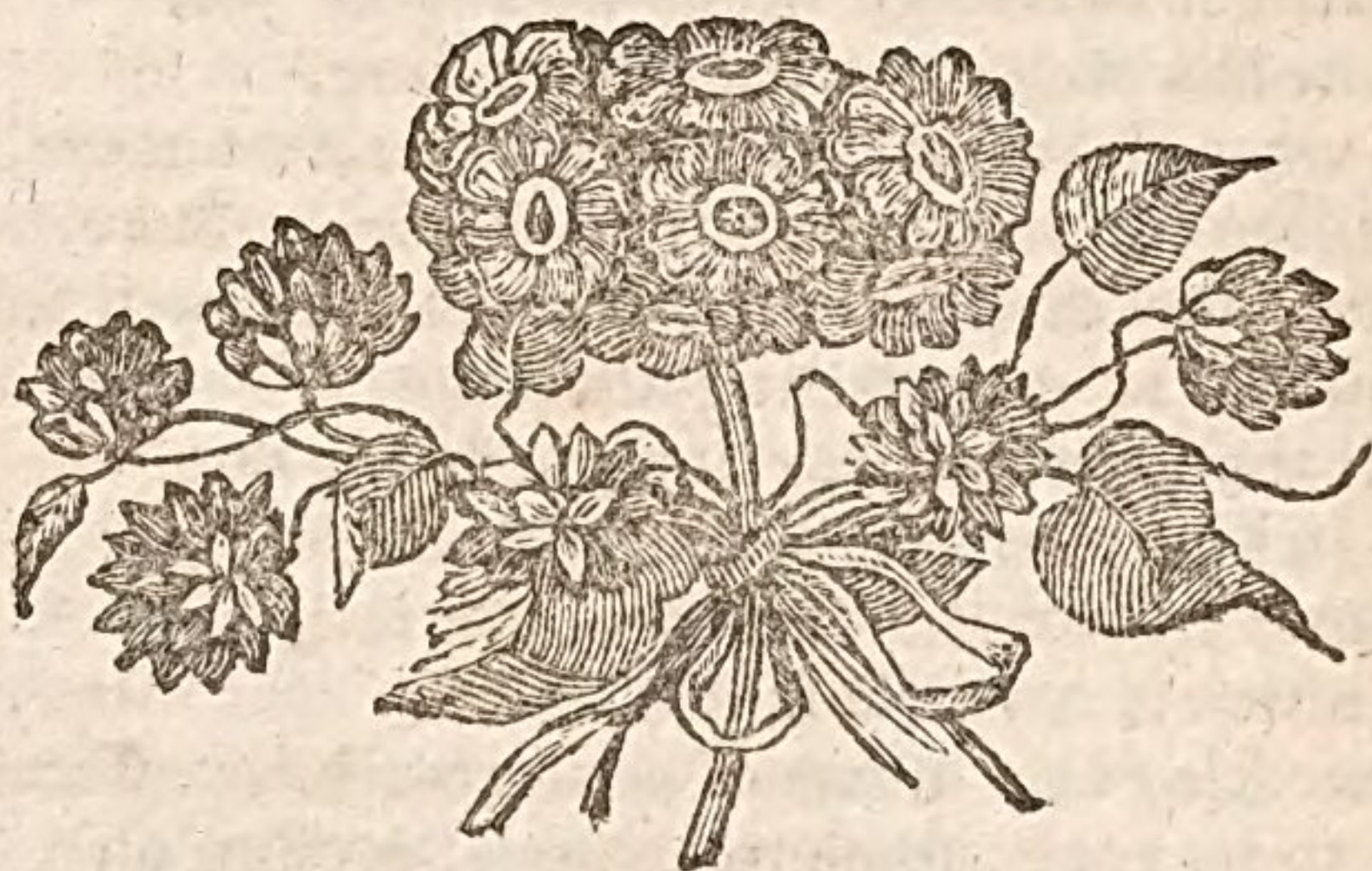
* Aristides. See his life in Plutarch.

Is equal both to punish and reward,
But few would love their God unless they fear'd.

Resistless force and immortality
Make but a lame imperfect deity: 350

Tempests have force unbounded to destroy,
And deathless being e'en the damn'd enjoy;
And yet heav'n's attributes, both last and first,
One without life, and one with life accurst!
But justice is heav'n's self, so strictly he, 355
That could it fail the godhead could not be.

This virtue is your own; but life and state
Are one to fortune subject, one to fate:
Equal to all, you justly frown or smile;
Nor hopes nor fears your steady hand beguile;
Yourself our balance hold, the worlds our isle. 361



RELIGIO LAICI;
OR, A LAYMAN'S FAITH.

AN EPISTLE.

THE PREFACE.

A POEM with so bold a title, and a name prefixed from which the handling of so serious a subject would not be expected, may reasonably oblige the author to say somewhat in defence both of himself and of his undertaking. In the first place, if it be objected to me that, being a layman, I ought not to have concerned myself with speculations which belong to the profession of divinity; I could answer, that perhaps laymen, with equal advantages of parts and knowledge, are not the most incompetent judges of sacred things. But, in the due sense of my own weakness and want of learning, I plead not this; I pretend not to make myself a judge of faith in others, but only to make a confession of my own. I lay no unhallowed hand upon the ark, but wait on it, with the reverence that becomes me, at a distance. In the next place, I will ingenuously confess, that the helps I have used in this small treatise were many of them taken from the works of our own reverend divines of the church of England; so that the weapons with which I combat irreligion are already consecrated; though I suppose they may be taken down as lawfully as the sword of Goliath was by David, when they are to be employed for the common cause against the enemies of piety. I intend not by this to entitle them to any of my errors; which yet I hope are only those of charity to mankind; and such as my *own* charity has caused me to commit, that of *others* may more easily excuse. Being naturally inclined to scepticism in philosophy, I have no reason to impose my opinions in a subject which is above it: but whatever they are, I submit them with all reverence to my Mother-church,

accounting them no farther mine than as they are authorised, or at least uncondemned, by her. And indeed to secure myself on this side, I have used the necessary precaution of shewing this paper, before it was published, to a judicious and learned friend, a man indefatigably zealous in the service of the church and state, and whose writings have highly deserved of both. He was pleased to approve the body of the discourse, and I hope he is more my friend than to do it out of complaisance. It is true, he had too good a taste to like it all; and, amongst some other faults, recommended to my second view what I have written, perhaps too boldly, on St. Athanasius, which he advised me wholly to omit. I am sensible enough that I had done more prudently to have followed his opinion; but then I could not have satisfied myself that I had done honestly not to have written what was my own. It has always been my thought that heathens, who never did, nor without miracle could, hear of the name of Christ, were yet in a possibility of salvation. Neither will it enter easily into my belief that, before the coming of our Saviour, the whole world, excepting only the Jewish nation, should lie under the inevitable necessity of everlasting punishment, for want of that revelation which was confined to so small a spot of ground as that of Palestine. Among the sons of Noah, we read of one only who was accursed; and if a blessing in the ripeness of time was reserved for Japheth, (of whose progeny we are) it seems unaccountable to me why so many generations, of the same offspring as preceded our Saviour in the flesh, should be all involved in one common condemnation, and yet that their posterity should be entitled to the hopes of salvation, as if a bill of exclusion had passed only on the fathers, which debarred not the sons from their succession; or that so many ages had been delivered over to hell, and so many reserved for heaven; and that the devil had the first choice and God the next. Truly I am apt to think that the revealed religion which was taught by Noah to all his sons might con-

tinue for some ages in the whole posterity: that afterwards it was included wholly in the family of Shem is manifest, but when the progenies of Ham and Japhet swarmed into colonies, and those colonies were subdivided into many others, in process of time their descendents lost, by little and little, the primitive and purer rites of divine worship, retaining only the notion of one deity, to which succeeding generations added others: for men took their degrees in those ages from conquerors to gods. Revelation being thus eclipsed to almost all mankind, the light of nature, as the next in dignity, was substituted: and that is it which St. Paul concludes to be the rule of the heathens, and by which they are hereafter to be judged. If my supposition be true, then the consequence which I have assumed in my poem may be also true; namely, that deism, or the principles of natural worship, are only the faint remnants or dying flames of revealed religion in the posterity of Noah; and that our modern philosophers, nay and some of our philosophizing divines, have too much exalted the faculties of our souls, when they have maintained that, by their force, mankind has been able to find out that there is one supreme Agent, or intellectual Being, which we call God; that praise and prayer are his due worship; and the rest of those deducements, which I am confident are the remote effects of revelation, and unattainable by our discourse, I mean as simply considered, and without the benefit of divine illumination: so that we have not lifted up ourselves to God by the weak pinions of our reason, but he has been pleased to descend to us; and what Socrates said of him, what Plato writ, and the rest of the heathen philosophers, of several nations, is all no more than the twilight of revelation, after the sun of it was set in the race of Noah. That there is something above us, some principle of motion, our reason can apprehend, though it cannot discover what it is by its own virtue. And indeed it is very improbable that we, who, by the strength of our faculties, cannot enter into the knowledge of any being, not so much

as of our own, should be able to find out by them that supreme nature, which we cannot otherwise define than by saying it is infinite; as if infinite were definable, or infinity a subject for our narrow understanding. They who would prove religion by reason, do but weaken the cause which they endeavour to support: it is to take away the pillars from our faith, and to prop it only with a twig; it is to design a tower like that of Babel, which, if it were possible, (as it is not) to reach to heaven, would come to nothing by the confusion of the workmen: for every man is building a several way, impotently conceited of his own model and his own materials. Reason is always striving, and always at a loss; and of necessity it must so come to pass, while it is exercised about that which is not its proper object. Let us be content at last to know God by his own methods; at least so much of him, as he is pleased to reveal to us in the sacred scriptures: to apprehend them to be the word of God is all our reason has to do; for all beyond it is the work of faith, which is the seal of heaven, impressed upon our human understanding.

And now for what concerns the holy bishop Athanasius, the preface of whose creed seems inconsistent with my opinion, which is, that heathens may possibly be saved. In the first place, I desire it may be considered that it is the preface only, not the creed itself, which (till I am better informed) is of too hard a digestion for my charity. It is not that I am ignorant how many several texts of scripture seemingly support that cause; but neither am I ignorant how all those texts may receive a kinder and more mollified interpretation. Every man, who is read in church-history, knows that belief was drawn up after a long contestation with Arius concerning the divinity of our blessed Saviour, and his being one substance with the Father; and that, thus compiled, it was sent abroad among the Christian churches, as a kind of test, which, whosoever took, was looked on as an orthodox believer. It is manifest from hence that the heathen part of the

empire was not concerned in it; for its business was not to distinguish betwixt Pagans and Christians, but betwixt heretics and true believers. This, well considered, takes off the heavy weight of censure which I would willingly avoid from so venerable a man; for if this proposition, "Whosoever will be saved," be restrained only to those to whom it was intended, and for whom it was composed, I mean the Christians, then the *anathema* reaches not the heathens, who had never heard of Christ, and were nothing interested in that dispute. After all, I am far from blaming even that prefatory addition to the creed, and as far from cavilling at the continuation of it in the liturgy of the church, where, on the days appointed, it is publicly read: for I suppose there is the same reason for it now, in opposition to the Socinians, as there was then against the Arians; the one being a heresy which seems to have been refined out of the other; and with how much more plausibility of reason it combats our religion, with so much more caution it ought to be avoided: therefore the prudence of our church is to be commended, which has interposed her authority for the recommendation of this creed. Yet, to such as are grounded in the true belief, those explanatory creeds, the Nicene, and this of Athanasius, might perhaps be spared: for what is supernatural will always be a mystery in spite of exposition: and, for my own part, the plain Apostles' creed is most suitable to my weak understanding, as the simplest diet is the most easy of digestion.

I have dwelt longer on this subject than I intended, and longer than perhaps I ought; for having laid down, as my foundation, that the scripture is a rule; that in all things needful to salvation it is clear, sufficient, and ordained by God Almighty for that purpose, I have left myself no right to interpret obscure places, such as concern the possibility of eternal happiness to heathens; because whatsoever is obscure is concluded not necessary to be known.

But, by asserting the scripture to be the canon of our faith, I have unavoidably created to myself two

forts of enemies : the Papists indeed more directly, because they have kept the scripture from us what they could, and have reserved to themselves a right of interpreting what they have delivered, under the pretence of infallibility ; and the fanatics more collaterally, because they have assumed what amounts to an infallibility in the private spirit, and have distorted those texts of scripture which are not necessary to salvation to the damnable uses of sedition, disturbance, and destruction of the civil government. To begin with the papists, and to speak freely, I think them the less dangerous (at least in appearance) to our present state ; for not only the penal laws are in force against them, and their number is contemptible, but also their peers and commons are excluded from Parliament, and consequently those laws in no probability of being repealed. A general and uninterrupted plot of their clergy, ever since the reformation I suppose all protestants believe ; for it is not reasonable to think but that so many of their orders, as were outed from their fat possessions, would endeavour a re-entrance against those whom they account heretics. As for the late design, Mr. Coleman's letters, for ought I know, are the best evidence ; and what they discover, without wire-drawing their sense or malicious glosses, all men of reason conclude credible. If there be any thing more than this required of me, I must believe it as well as I am able, in spite of the witnesses, and out of a decent conformity to the votes of Parliament ; for I suppose the fanatics will not allow the private spirit in this case. Here the infallibility is at least in our part of the government, and our understandings as well as our wills are represented. But to return to the Roman Catholics ; how can we be secured from the practice of Jesuited Papists in that religion ? For not two or three of that order, as some of them would impose upon us, but almost the whole body of them, are of opinion, that their infallible master has a right over kings, not only in spirituals but temporals. Not to name Mariano, Bellarmine, Emanuel Sa, Molina, San-

taret, Simanca, and at least twenty others of foreign countries, we can produce of our own nation Campian, and Doleman, or Parsons, besides many are named whom I have not read, who all of them attest this doctrine, that the pope can depose and give away the right of any sovereign prince, *si vel paulum deflexerit*, if he shall never so little warp; but if he once comes to be excommunicated, then the bond of obedience is taken off from subjects, and they may and ought to drive him, like another Nebuchadnezzar, *ex hominum Christianorum dominatu*, from exercising dominion over Christians; and to this they are bound by virtue of divine precept, and by all the ties of conscience, under no less penalty than damnation. If they answer me (as a learned priest has lately written) that this doctrine of the Jesuits is not *de fide*, and that consequently they are not obliged by it, they must pardon me if I think they have said nothing to the purpose; for it is a maxim in their church, where points of faith are not decided, and that doctors are of contrary opinions, they may follow which part they please, but more safely the most received and most authorized: and their champion Bellarmine has told the world, in his apology, that the King of England is a vassal to the Pope, *ratione directi domini*, and that he holds in villanage of his Roman landlord; which is no new claim put in for England. Our chronicles are his authentic witnesses that King John was deposed by the same plea, and Philip Augustus admitted tenant and (which makes the more for Bellarmine) the French king was again ejected when our king submitted to the church, and the crown was received under the sordid condition of a vassalage.

It is not sufficient for the more moderate and well-meaning papists (of which I doubt not there are many) to produce the evidences of their loyalty to the late king, and to declare their innocency in this plot. I will grant their behaviour, in the first, to have been as loyal and as brave as they desire; and will be willing to hold them excused as to the second, I mean, when

it comes to my turn, and after my betters ; for it is a madness to be sober alone while the nation continues drunk. But that saying of their father Cress. is still running in my head, that they may be dispensed with in their obedience to an heretic prince, while the necessity of the times shall oblige them to it ; for that (as another of them tells us) is only the effect of Christian prudence : but when once they shall get power to shake him off, an heretic is no lawful king, and consequently to rise against him is no rebellion. I should be glad therefore that they would follow the advice which was charitably given them by a reverend prelate of our church, namely, that they would join in a public act, of disowning and detesting those Jesuitic principles, and subscribe to all doctrines which deny the pope's authority of deposing kings, and releasing subjects from their oath of allegiance ; to which I should think they might easily be induced, if it be true that this present pope has condemned the doctrine of king-killing (a thesis of the Jesuits) maintained amongst other, *ex cathedra*, (as they call it) or in open consistory.

Leaving them therefore in so fair a way (if they please themselves) of satisfying all reasonable men of their sincerity and good meaning to the government, I shall make bold to consider that other extreme of our religion, I mean the fanatics or schismatics of the English church. Since the Bible has been translated into our tongue, they have used it so as if their business was not to be saved, but to be damned, by its contents. If we consider only them, better had it been for the English nation that it had still remained in the original Greek and Hebrew, or at least in the honest Latin of St. Jerome, than that several texts in it should have been prevaricated to the destruction of that government which put it into so ungrateful hands.

How many heresies the first translation of Tindal produced in a few years, let my Lord Herbert's history of Henry VIII. inform you ; insomuch, that for the gross errors in it, and the great mischiefs it occasioned,

a sentence passed on the first edition of the Bible, too shameful almost to be repeated. After the short reign of Edward VI. (who had continued to carry on the reformation on other principles than it was begun) every one knows; that not only the chief promoters of that work, but many others, whose consciences would not dispense with popery, were forced, for fear of persecution, to change climates; from whence returning at the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's reign, many of them who had been in France and at Geneva brought back the rigid opinions and imperious discipline of Calvin to graft upon our reformation: which, though they cunningly concealed at first, as well knowing how nauseously that drug would go down in a lawful monarchy which was prescribed for a rebellious common-wealth, yet they always kept it in reserve, and were never wanting to themselves either in court or parliament, when either they had any prospect of a numerous party of fanatic members of the one, or the encouragement of any favourite in the other, whose covetousness was gaping at the patrimony of the church. They who will consult the works of our venerable Hooker, or the account of his life, or more particularly the letter written to him on this subject by George Cranmer, may see by what gradations they proceeded. From the dislike of cap and surplice, the very next step was admonitions to the Parliament against the whole government ecclesiastical: then came out volumes in English and Latin in defence of their tenets; and immediately practices were set on foot to erect their discipline without authority. Those not succeeding, satire and railing was the next; and Martin Mar-Prelate (the marvel of those times) was the first presbyterian scribler who sanctified libels and scurrility to the use of the good old cause; which was done, says my author, upon this account, that (their serious treatises having been fully answered and refuted) they might compass by railing what they had lost by reasoning; and when their cause was sunk in court and parliament, they might at least hedge in a stake amongst

the rabble; for to their ignorance all things are wit which are abusive; but if church and state were made the theme, then the doctorial degree of wit was to be taken at Billingsgate. Even the most saint-like of the party, though they durst not excuse this contempt and vilifying of the government, yet were pleased, and grinned at it with a pious smile, and called it a judgment of God against the hierarchy. Thus sectaries, we may see, were born with teeth, foul-mouthed, and scurrilous from their infancy; and if spiritual pride, venom, violence, contempt of superiors, and slander, had been the marks of orthodox belief, the presbytery, and the rest of our schismatics, which are their spawn, were always the most visible church in the Christian world.

It is true, the government was too strong at that time for a rebellion; but to show what proficiency they had made in Calvin's school, even then their mouths watered at it; for two of their gifted brotherhood, Hacket and Coppinger, as the story tells us, got up into a pease-cart; and harangued the people, to dispose them into an insurrection, and to establish their discipline by force: so that, however it comes about that now they celebrate Queen Elizabeth's birthnight as that of their saint and patroness, yet then they were for doing the work of the Lord by arms against her; and, in all probability, they wanted but a fanatical lord-mayor and two sheriffs of their party to have compassed it.

Our venerable Hooker, after many admonitions which he had given them, towards the end of his preface breaks out into this prophetic speech: "There
" is in every one of these considerations most just cause
" to fear, lest our hastiness to embrace a thing of so
" perilous consequence" (meaning the presbyterian discipline) "should cause posterity to feel those evils
" which as yet are more easy for us to prevent than
" they would be for them to remedy."

How fatally this Cassandra has foretold, we know too well by sad experience. The seeds were sown in

the time of Queen Elizabeth; the bloody harvest ripened in the reign of King Charles the Martyr; and, because all the sheaves could not be carried off without shedding some of the loose grains, another crop is too like to follow; nay, I fear it is unavoidable, if the Conventiclers be permitted still to scatter.

A man may be suffered to quote an adversary to our religion when he speaks truth; and it is the observation of Maimbourg, in his history of Calvinism, that wherever that discipline was planted and embraced, rebellion, civil war, and misery, attended it. And how indeed should it happen otherwise? Reformation of church and state has always been the ground of our divisions in England. While we were papists, our holy father rid us, by pretending authority out of the scriptures to depose princes; when we shook off his authority, the sectaries furnished themselves with the same weapons, and out of the same magazine, the Bible. So that the scriptures, which are in themselves the greatest security of governors, as commanding express obedience to them, are now turned to their destruction; and never, since the reformation, has there wanted a text of their interpreting to authorize a rebel. And it is to be noted, by the way, that the doctrines of king-killing and deposing, which have been taken up only by the worst party of the Papists, the most frontless flatterers of the Pope's authority, have been espoused, defended, and are still maintained, by the whole body of Nonconformists and Republicans. It is but dubbing themselves the people of God, which it is the interest of their preachers to tell them they are, and their own interest to believe, and, after that, they cannot dip into the Bible but one text or another will turn up for their purpose. If they are under persecution, as they call it, then that is a mark of their election; if they flourish, then God works miracles for their deliverance, and the saints are to possess the earth.

They may think themselves to be too roughly handled in this paper; but I, who know best how far I could

have gone on this subject, must be bold to tell them they are spared; though at the same time I am not ignorant that they interpret the mildness of a writer to them as they do the mercy of the government; in the one they think it fear, and conclude it weakness in the other. The best way for them to confute me is, as I before advised the Papists, to disclaim their principles, and renounce their practices. We shall all be glad to think them true Englishmen when they obey the king, and true Protestants when they conform to the church-discipline.

It remains that I acquaint the reader that these verses were written for an ingenious young gentleman, my friend, upon his translation of the Critical History of the old Testament, composed by the learned Father Simon: the verses therefore are addressed to the translator of that work, and the style of them is, what it ought to be, epistolary.

If any one be so lamentable a critic as to require the smoothness, the numbers, and the turn of heroic poetry, in this poem, I must tell him, that if he has not read Horace I have studied him, and hope the style of his epistles is not ill imitated here. The expressions of a poem, designed purely for instruction, ought to be plain and natural, and yet majestic; for here the poet is presumed to be a kind of lawgiver, and those three qualities which I have named are proper to the legislative style: the florid, elevated, and figurative way is for the passions; for love and hatred, fear and anger, are begotten in the soul by showing their objects out of their true proportion, either greater than the life, or less; but instruction is to be given by showing them what they naturally are. A man is to be cheated into passion, but to be reasoned into truth.

Ornari res ipsa negat, contra docere.

DIM as the borrow'd beams of moon and stars
 To lonely, weary, wand'ring travellers,
 Is reason to the soul: and as on high
 Those rolling fires discover but the sky,
 Not light us here; so Reason's glimmering ray 5
 Was lent, not to assure our doubtful way,
 But guide us upward to a better day.
 And as those nightly tapers disappear
 When day's bright lord ascends our hemisphere,
 So pale grows Reason at Religion's sight, 10
 So dies, and so dissolves in supernat'ral light.
 Some few, whose lamp shone brighter, have been led
 From cause to cause, to Nature's secret head,
 And found that one first principle must be;
 But what or who that Universal He, 15
 Whether some soul encompassing this ball
 Unmade, unmov'd, yet making, moving all,
 Or various atoms, interfering dance,
 Leapt into form, the noble work of Chance;
 Or this great All was from eternity, 20
 Not e'en the Stagirite himself could see,
 And Epicurus guess'd as well as he.
 As blindly grop'd they for a future state,
 As rashly judg'd of Providence and Fate!
 But least of all could their endeavours find 25
 What most concern'd the good of humankind;
 For happiness was never to be found,
 But vanish'd from them like enchanted ground.
 One thought content the good to be enjoy'd;
 This ev'ry little accident destroy'd: 30
 The wiser madmen did for virtue toil,
 A thorny, or at best a barren soil:
 In pleasure some their glutton souls would steep,
 But found their line too short, the well too deep,
 And leaky vessels which no bliss could keep. 35
 Thus anxious thoughts in endless circles roll,
 Without a centre where to fix the soul:

In this wild maze their vain endeavours end ;
 How can the less the greater comprehend ?
 Or finite reason reach infinity ?

40

For what could fathom God were more than He.

The Deist thinks he stands on firmer ground ;
 Cries *Eὐρηκα* the mighty secret's found :
 God is that spring of good, supreme, and best ;
 We made to serve, and in that service blest.

45

If so, some rules of worship must be giv'n,
 Distributed alike to all by heav'n ;
 Else God were partial, and to some deny'd
 The means his justice should for all provide.
 This general worship is to praise and pray ;
 One part to borrow blessings, one to pay :
 And when frail nature slides into offence,
 The sacrifice for crimes is penitence.

50

Yet since th' effects of Providence we find
 Are variously dispens'd to human kind ;
 That vice triumphs, and virtue suffers here,
 (A brand that sov'reign Justice cannot bear)
 Our reason prompts us to a future state.

55

The last appeal from Fortune and from Fate,
 Where God's all-righteous ways will be declar'd,
 The bad meet punishment, the good reward.

60

Thus man, by his own strength, to heav'n would
 And would not be oblig'd to God for more. [soar.

Vain, wretched creature ! how art thou misled,
 To think thy wit these godlike notions bred !

65

These truths are not the product of thy mind,
 But drop from heav'n, and of a nobler kind.
 Reveal'd religion first inform'd thy sight,
 And Reason saw not till Faith sprung the light.

Hence all thy nat'ral worship takes the source ;

70

'Tis revelation what thou think'st discourse ;
 Else how com'st thou to see these truths so clear
 Which so obscure to heathens did appear ?

Not Plato these, nor Aristotle, found,

Nor he whose wisdom oracles renown'd

75

Hast thou a wit so deep or so sublime ?

Or canst thou lower dive or higher climb ?

Canst thou by reason more of Godhead know
Than Plutarch, Seneca, or Cicero?

Those giant wits, in happier ages born, 80
When arms and arts did Greece and Rome adorn,
Knew no such system; no such piles could raise
Of nat'ral worship, built on pray'r and praise,
To one sole God.

Nor did remorse to expiate sin prescribe, 85
But slew their fellow-creatures for a bribe:
The guiltless victim groan'd for their offence,
And cruelty and blood was penitence.

If sheep and oxen could atone for men,
Ah! at how cheap a rate the rich might sin! 90
And great oppressors might heav'n's wrath beguile,
By off'ring his own creatures for a spoil!

Dar'st thou, poor worm! offend Infinity?
And must the terms of peace be giv'n by thee?
Then thou art justice in the last appeal; 95
Thy easy God instructs thee to rebel;
And like a king remote and weak, must take
What satisfaction thou art pleas'd to make.

But if there be a pow'r too just and strong
To wink at crimes, and bear unpunish'd wrong, 100
Look humbly upward, see his will disclose
The forfeit first, and then the fine impose;
A mulct thy poverty could never pay
Had not Eternal Wisdom found the way,
And with celestial wealth supply'd thy store; 105
His justice makes the fine, his mercy quits the score.
See God descending in thy human frame,
Th' offended suff'ring in th' offender's name;
All thy misdeeds to him imputed see,
And all his righteousness devolv'd on thee. 110

For granting we have sinn'd, and that th' offence
Of man is made against Omnipotence,
Some price that bears proportion must be paid,
And infinite with infinite be weigh'd,
See then the Deist lost; remorse for vice 115
Not paid, or paid inadequate in price.

What further means can reason now direct ?
 Or what relief from human wit expect ?
 That shews us sick, and sadly are we sure
 Still to be sick till heav'n reveal the cure. 120
 If then heav'n's will must needs be understood,
 (Which must, if we want cure, and heav'n be good)
 Let all records of will reveal'd be shown,
 With scripture all in equal balance thrown,
 And our one sacred book will be that one. 125

Proof needs not here ; for whether we compare
 That impious, idle, superstitious ware
 Of rites, lustrations, offerings, which before,
 In various ages, various countries bore,
 Which Christian faith and virtues, we shall find 130
 None answ'ring the great ends of human kind
 But this one rule of life ; that shews us best
 How God may be appeas'd and mortals blest.
 Whether from length of time its worth we draw,
 The word is scarce more ancient than the law : 135
 Heav'n's early care prescrib'd for ev'ry age,
 First in the soul, and after in the page :
 Or whether more abstractedly we look,
 Or on the writers or the written book,
 Whence but from heav'n could men unskill'd in arts,
 In sev'ral ages born, in sev'ral parts 140
 Weave such agreeing truths ? or how or why
 Should all conspire to cheat us with a lie ?
 Unask'd their pains, ungrateful their advice,
 Starving their gain, and martyrdom their price. 145

If on the book itself we cast our view,
 Concurrent Heathens prove the story true :
 The doctrine, miracles, which must convince,
 For heav'n in them appeals to human sense ;
 And tho' they prove not, they confirm the cause,
 When what is taught agrees with Nature's laws. 150

Then for the style : majestic and divine,
 It speaks no less than God in ev'ry line :
 Commanding words, whose force is still the same
 As the first fiat that produc'd our frame. 155

All faiths beside or did by arms ascend,
 Or sense indulg'd has made mankind their friend :
 This only doctrine does our lusts oppose,
 Unfed by Nature's soil in which it grows ;
 Cross to our int'rests, curbing sense and sin, 160
 Oppress'd without, and undermin'd within,
 It thrives thro' pain, its own tormentors tires,
 And with a stubborn patience still aspires.
 To what can reason such effects assign
 Transcending nature but to laws divine ? 165
 Which in that sacred volume are contain'd,
 Sufficient, clear, and for that use ordain'd.

But stay, the Deist here will urge anew
 No supernat'ral worship can be true ;
 Because a gen'ral law is that alone 170
 Which must to all and ev'ry where be known ;
 A style so large as not this book can claim,
 Nor ought that bears reveal'd Religion's name.
 'Tis said the sound of a Messiah's birth
 Is gone thro' all the habitable earth ; 175
 But still that text must be confin'd alone
 To what was then inhabited and known ;
 And what provision could from thence accrue
 To Indian souls, and worlds discover'd new ?
 In other parts it helps, that, ages past, 180
 The Scriptures there were known, and were embrac'd
 Till sin spread once again the shades of night :
 What's that to these who never saw the light ?

Of all objections this indeed is chief
 To startle reason, stagger frail belief. 185
 We grant 'tis true that heav'n from human sense
 Has hid the secret paths of Providence ;
 But boundless wisdom, boundless mercy, may
 Find ev'n for those bewilder'd souls a way :
 If from his nature foes may pity claim, 190
 Much more may strangers who ne'er heard his name :
 And tho' no name be for salvation known
 But that of his eternal Son's alone,
 Who knows how far transcending goodness can
 Extend the merits of that Son to man ? 195

Who knows what reasons may his mercy lead,
 Or ignorance invincible may plead?
 Not only charity bids hope the best,
 But more the great apostle has exprest;
 That, "if the Gentiles (whom no law inspir'd) 200
 By nature did what was by law requir'd,
 They, who the written rule had never known,
 Were to themselves both rule and law alone;
 To nature's plain indictment they shall plead,
 And by their conscience be condemn'd or freed." 205
 Most righteous doom! because a rule reveal'd
 Is none to those from whom it was conceal'd.
 Then those who follow'd Reason's dictates right
 Liv'd up, and lifted high their nat'ral light;
 With Socrates may see their Maker's face, 210
 While thousand rubric martyrs want a place.

Nor doth it baulk my charity to find
 Th' Egyptian bishop of another mind:
 For tho' his creed eternal truth contains,
 'Tis hard for man to doom to endless pains 215
 All who believ'd not all his zeal requir'd,
 Unless he first could prove he was inspir'd.
 Then let us either think he meant to say,
 This faith where publish'd was the only way;
 Or else conclude that, Arius to confute, 220
 The good old man, too eager in dispute,
 Flew high, and, as his Christian fury rose,
 Damn'd all for heretics who durst oppose.

Thus far my charity this path hath try'd,
 (A much unskilful, but well-meaning guide) 225
 Yet what they are, e'en these crude thoughts were bred
 By reading that which better thou hast read,
 Thy matchless author's work; which thou, my friend,
 By well translating better dost commend:
 Those youthful hours which, of thy equals most 230
 In toys have squander'd, or in vice have lost,
 Those hours hast thou to nobler use employ'd,
 And the severe delights of truth enjoy'd:
 Witness this weighty book, in which appears
 The crabbed toil of many thoughtful years, 235

Spent by my author in the sifting care
 Of Rabin's old soph'isticated ware
 From gold divine ; which he who well can sort
 May afterwards make Algebra a sport.
 A treasure which, if country curates buy, 240
 They Junius and Tremellius may defy ;
 Save pains in various readings and translations,
 And without Hebrew make most learn'd quotations.
 A work so full, with various learning fraught,
 So nicely ponder'd, yet so strongly wrought, 245
 As Nature's height and Art's last hand requir'd ;
 As much as man could compass uninspir'd :
 Where we may see what errors have been made
 Both in the copiers' and translators' trade ;
 How Jewish, Popish int'rests have prevail'd, 250
 And where infallibility has fail'd.

For some, who have his secret meaning guess'd,
 Have found our author not too much a priest :
 For fashion-sake he seems to have recourse.
 To pope, and councils, and tradition's force : 255
 But he that old traditions could subdue
 Could not but find the weakness of the new.
 If scripture, tho' deriv'd from heav'nly birth,
 Has been but carelessly preserv'd on earth ;
 If God's own people, who of God before 260
 Knew what we know, and had been promis'd more
 In fuller terms, of heav'n's assisting care,
 And who did neither time nor study spare
 To keep this book untainted, unperplext,
 Let in gross errors to corrupt the text, 265
 Omitted paragraphs, embroil'd the sense,
 With vain traditions stopt the gaping fence,
 Which ev'ry common hand pull'd up with ease,
 What safety from such brush-wood helps as these ?
 If written words from time are not secur'd, 270
 How can we think have oral sounds endur'd ?
 Which thus transmitted, if one mouth has fail'd,
 Immortal lies on ages are entail'd ;
 And that some such have been, is prov'd too plain,
 If we consider int'rest, church and gain. 275

Oh but, says one, tradition set aside,
 Where can we hope for an unerring guide?
 For, since th' orig'nal scripture has been lost,
 All copies disagreeing, maim'd the most,
 Or Christian faith can have no certain ground, 280
 Or truth in church tradition must be found.

Such an omniscient church we wish indeed;
 'Twere worth both Testaments, cast in the creed;
 But if this mother be a guide so sure
 As can all doubts resolve, all truths secure, 285
 Then her infallibility as well,

Where copies are corrupt, or lame, can tell;
 Restore lost canon with as little pains
 As truly explicate what still remains;
 Which yet no council dare pretend to do, 290
 Unless, like Esdras, they could write it new:
 Strange confidence, still to interpret true,
 Yet not be sure that all they have explain'd
 Is in the bless'd original contain'd!

More safe, and much more modest, 'tis to say, 295
 God would not leave mankind without a way,
 And that the scriptures, tho' not ev'ry where
 Free from corruption, or entire, or clear,
 Are, uncorrupt, sufficient, clear, entire,
 In all things which our needful faith require. 300
 If others in the same glass better see,
 'Tis for themselves they look, but not for me;
 For my salvation must its doom receive,
 Not from what others but what I believe.

Must all tradition then be set aside? 305
 This to affirm were ignorance or pride.

Are there not many points, some needful sure
 To saving faith, that scripture leaves obscure?
 Which ev'ry sect will wrest a sev'ral way;
 For what one sect interprets all sects may: 310
 We hold, and say, we prove from scripture plain,
 That Christ is God: the bold Socinian
 From the same scripture urges he's but Man.
 Now what appeal can end th' important suit?
 Both parts talk loudly, but the rule is mute.

Shall I speak plain, and, in a nation free,
 Assume an honest layman's liberty?
 I think (according to my little skill)
 To my own mother-church submitting still,
 That many have been sav'd, and many may, 320
 Who never heard this question brought in play.
 Th' unletter'd Christian, who believes in gross,
 Plods on to heav'n and ne'er is at a loss:
 For the strait gate would be made straiter yet
 Were none admitted there but men of wit. 325
 The few, by nature form'd, with learning fraught,
 Born to instruct, as others to be taught,
 Must study well the sacred page, and see
 Which doctrine, this or that, does best agree
 With the whole tenour of the work divine, 330
 And plainliest points to heav'n's reveal'd design;
 Which exposition flows from genuine sense,
 And which is forc'd by wit and eloquence.
 Not that tradition's parts are useless here,
 When general, old, disinterested, clear: 335
 That ancient Fathers thus expound the page,
 Gives truth the rev'rend majesty of age;
 Confirms its force by bidding ev'ry test,
 For best authorities next rules are best;
 And still the nearer to the spring we go, 340
 More limpid, more unsoil'd, the waters flow.
 Thus first traditions were a proof alone,
 Could we be certain such they were, so known;
 But since some flaws in long descent may be,
 They make not truth, but probability. 345
 E'en Arius and Pelagius durst provoke
 To what the centuries preceding spoke:
 Such diff'rence is there in an oft-told tale,
 But truth by its own sinews will prevail.
 Tradition written therefore more commends
 Authority than what from voice descends; 350
 And this, as perfect as its kind can be,
 Rolls down to us the sacred history,
 Which, from the universal church receiv'd,
 Is try'd, and after for itself believ'd. 555

The partial Papists would infer from thence
 Their church, in last resort, should judge the sense.
 But first they would assume, with wondrous art,
 Themselves to be the whole, who are but part
 Of that vast frame, the church : yet grant they were
 The handers-down, can they from thence infer 361
 A right t'interpret ? or would they alone
 Who brought the present claim it for their own ?
 The book's a common largess to mankind,
 Not more for them than ev'ry man design'd ; 365
 The welcome news is in the letter found,
 The carrier's not commission'd to expound :
 It speaks itself, and what it does contain,
 In all things needful to be known is plain.
 In times o'ergrown with rust and ignorance, 370
 A gainful trade their clergy did advance,
 When want of learning kept the layman low,
 And none but priests were authoriz'd to know ;
 When what small knowledge was in them did dwell,
 And he a god who could but read and spell ; 375
 Then mother-church did mightily prevail,
 She parcell'd out the Bible by retail,
 But still expounded what she sold or gave,
 To keep it in her pow'r to damn and save :
 Scripture was scarce, and, as the market went, 380
 Poor laymen took salvation on content,
 As needy men take money, good or bad ;
 God's word they had not, but the priest's they had.
 Yet, whate'er false conveyances they made,
 The lawyer still was certain to be paid. 385
 In those dark times they learn'd their knack so well,
 That by long use they grew infallible.
 At last, a knowing age began t'inquire
 If they the book, or that did them inspire ; 389
 And, making narrower search, they found, tho' late,
 That what they thought the priests' was their estate ;
 Taught by the will produc'd (the written word)
 How long they had been cheated on record ;
 Then ev'ry man, who saw the title fair,
 Claim'd a child's part, and put in for a share ; 395

Consulted soberly his private good,
And sav'd himself as cheap as e'er he could.

'Tis true, my friend, (and far be flatt'ry hence)
This good had full as bad a consequence:

The book thus put in ev'ry vulgar hand, 400

Which each presum'd he best could understand,

The common rule was made the common prey,

And at the mercy of the rabble lay:

The tender page with horny fists was gall'd,

And he was gifted most that loudest bawl'd: 405

The spirit gave the doctoral degree,

And ev'ry member of a company

Was of his trade, and of the Bible, free.

Plain truths enough for needful use they found,

But men would still be itching to expound: 410

Each was ambitious of th' obscurest place;

No measure ta'en from knowledge, all from grace:

Study and pains were now no more their care;

Texts were explain'd by fasting and by pray'r:

This was the fruit the private spirit brought, 415

Occasion'd by great zeal and little thought.

While crowds unlearn'd, with rude devotion warm,

About the sacred viands buz and swarm,

The fly-blown text creates a crawling brood,

And turns to maggots what was meant for food. 420

A thousand daily sects rise up and die;

A thousand more the perish'd race supply;

So all we make of heav'n's discovered will

Is not to have it, or to use it ill.

The danger's much the same, on several shelves, 425

If others wreck us, or we wreck ourselves.

What then remains but, waving each extreme,

The tides of ignorance and pride to stem;

Neither so rich a treasure to forego,

Nor proudly seek beyond our pow'r to know. 430

Faith is not built on disquisitions vain;

The things we must believe are few and plain:

But since men will believe more than they need,

And ev'ry man will make himself a creed,

In doubtful questions 'tis the safest way 434
To learn what unsuspected ancients say ;
For 'tis not likely we should higher soar
In search of heav'n than all the church before :
Nor can we be deceiv'd, unless we see
The scripture and the fathers disagree. 440
If, after all, they stand suspected still,
(For no man's faith depends upon his will)
'Tis some relief, that points not clearly known,
Without much hazard, may be let alone.
And, after hearing what our church can say, 445
If still our reason runs another way,
That private reason 'tis more just to curb,
Than by disputes the public peace disturb ;
For points obscure are of small use to learn,
But common quiet is mankind's concern. 450

Thus have I made my own opinions clear,
Yet neither praise expect, nor censure fear ;
And this unpolish'd rugged verse I chose,
As fittest for discourse, and nearest prose :
For while from sacred truth I do not swerve, 455
Tom Sternhold's or Tom Shadwell's rhymes will serve.



THRENODIA AUGUSTALIS: 95

A FUNERAL PINDARIC POEM,

SACRED TO THE HAPPY MEMORY OF KING CHARLES II.

*Fortunati ambo! si quid mea carmina possunt,
Nulla dies unquam memori vos eximet ævo. Virg.*

THUS long my grief has kept me dumb :
 Sure there's a lethargy in mighty woe,
 Tears stand congeal'd and cannot flow;
 And the sad soul retires into her inmost room.
 Tears, for a stroke foreseen, afford relief; 5
 But, unprovided for a sudden blow,
 Like Niobe we marble grow,
 And petrify with grief.
 Our British heav'n was all serene,
 No threat'ning cloud was nigh, 10
 Not the least wrinkle to deform the sky;
 We liv'd as unconcern'd and happily
 As the first age in nature's golden scene.
 Supine amidst our flowing store,
 We slept securely, and we dream'd of more, 15
 When suddenly the thunderclap was heard;
 It took us unprepar'd and out of guard,
 Already lost before we fear'd.
 Th' amazing news of Charles at once were spread;
 At once the general voice declar'd 20
 "Our gracious prince was dead."
 No sickness known before, no slow disease,
 To soften grief by just degrees;
 But like an hurricane on Indian seas
 The tempest rose; 25
 An unexpected burst of woes,
 With scarce a breathing space betwixt,
 This now becalm'd, and perishing the next.
 As if great Atlas from his height
 Should sink beneath his heavenly weight, 30
 And, with a mighty flaw, the flaming wall,
 As once it shall, [this nether ball;
 Should gape immense, and, rushing down, o'erwhelm

So swift and so surprising was our fear :
Our Atlas fell indeed ; but Hercules was near. 35

II.

His pious brother, sure the best
Who ever bore that name,
Was newly risen from his rest,
And with a fervent flame
His usual morning vows had just address 40
For his dear sov'reign's health,
And hop'd to have 'em heard
In long increase of years,
In honour, fame, and wealth.
Guiltless of greatness thus he always pray'd, 45
Nor knew nor wished those vows he made
On his own head should be repaid.
Soon as th' ill-omen'd rumour reach'd his ear,
(Ill news is wing'd with fate, and flies apace)
Who can describe th' amazement of his face ! 50
Horror in all his pomp was there,
Mute and magnificent without a tear,
And then the hero first was seen to fear.
Half unarray'd he ran to his relief,
So hasty and so artless was his grief : 55
Approaching Greatness met him with her charms
Of pow'r and future state :
But look'd so ghastly in a brother's fate,
He shook her from his arms.
Arriv'd within the mournful room, he saw 60
A wild distraction void of awe,
And arbitrary grief unbounded by a law.
God's image, God's anointed, lay
Without motion, pulse, or breath,
A senseless lump of sacred clay, 65
An image now of Death.
Amidst his sad attendants groans and cries,
The lines of that ador'd forgiving face,
Distorted from their native grace ;
An iron slumber sat on his majestic eyes. 70
The pious Duke——forbear, audacious muse!
No terms thy feeble art can use

Are able to adorn so vast a woe :
 The grief of all the rest like subject-grief did show ;
 His like a sov'reign did transcend ; 75
 No wife, no brother, such a grief could know,
 Nor any name but friend.

III.

O wond'rous changes of a fatal scene,
 Still varying to the last !
 Heav'n, tho' its hard decree was past, 80
 Seem'd pointing to a gracious turn again ;
 And Death's uplifted arm arrested in its haste.
 Heaven half repented of the doom,
 And almost griev'd it had foreseen
 What by foresight it will'd eternally to come. 85
 Mercy above did hourly plead
 For her resemblance here below,
 And mild Forgiveness intercede
 To stop the coming blow.
 New miracles approach'd th' ethereal throne, 90
 Such as his wond'rous life had oft and lately known,
 And urg'd that still they might be shown.
 On earth his pious brother pray'd and vow'd,
 Renouncing greatness at so dear a rate,
 Himself defending what he could 95
 From all the glories of his future fate.
 With him th' innumerable crowd
 Of armed prayers
 Knock'd at the gates of heaven, and knock'd aloud ;
 The first well-meaning rude petitioners 100
 All for his life assail'd the throne, [own.
 All would have brib'd the skies by offering up their
 So great a throng not heaven itself could bar ;
 'Twas almost borne by force, as in the giant's war.
 The pray'rs at least for his reprieve were heard ; 105
 His death, like Hezekiah's, was deferr'd :
 Against the sun the shadow went ;
 Five days those five degrees were lent
 To form our patience, and prepare th' event.
 The second causes took the swift command, 110
 The medicinal head, the ready hand,

All eager to perform their part ;
 All but eternal doom was conquer'd by their art :
 Once more the fleeting soul came back
 T' inspire the mortal frame, 115
 And in the body took a doubtful stand,
 Doubtful and hov'ring, like expiring flame [brand.
 That mounts and falls by turns, and trembles o'er the
 IV.

The joyful short-liv'd news soon spread around,
 Took the same train, the same impetuous bound: 120
 The drooping town in smiles again was dress'd ;
 Gladness in ev'ry face express'd,
 Their eyes before their tongues confess'd.
 Men met each other with erected look,
 The steps were higher that they took ; 125
 Friends to congratulate their friends made haste,
 And long invet'rate foes saluted as they past.
 Above the rest heroic James appear'd,
 Exalted more because he more had fear'd :
 His manly heart, whose noble pride 130
 Was still above
 Dissembled hate or varnish'd love,
 Its more than common transport could not hide ;
 But like an eagle, rode in triumph o'er the tide.
 Thus, in alternate course, 135
 The tyrant passions, hope and fear,
 Did in extremes appear,
 And flash'd upon the soul with equal force.
 Thus at half ebb, a rolling sea
 Returns and wins upon the shore ; 140
 The wat'ry herd, affrighted at the roar,
 Rest on their fins a while, and stay,
 Then backward take their wond'ring way :
 The prophet wonders more than they
 At prodigies but rarely seen before, 145
 And cries, a king must fall, or kingdoms change their
 Such were our counter-tides at land, and so [sway.
 Presaging of the fatal blow
 In their prodigious ebb and flow.

The royal soul, that, like the lab'ring moon,
 By charms of art was hurry'd down,
 Forc'd with regret to leave her native sphere,
 Came but a while on liking here :
 Soon weary of the painful strife,
 And made but faint essays of life. 155

An evening light,
 Soon shut in night ;
 A strong distemper, and a weak relief ;
 Short intervals of joy, and long returns of grief.

V.

The sons of Art all med'cines try'd, 160
 And ev'ry noble remedy apply'd :
 With emulation each essay'd
 His utmost skill ; nay more, they pray'd :
 Never was losing game with better conduct play'd ;
 Death never won a stake with greater toil, 165
 Nor e'er was Fate so near a foil :

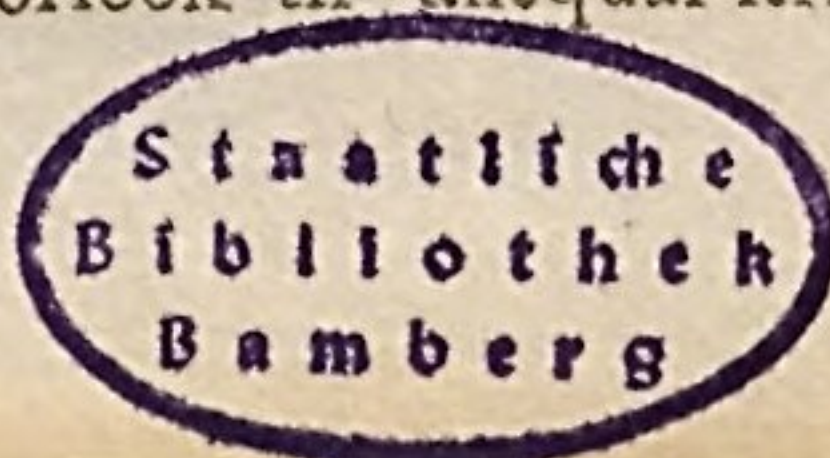
But, like a fortress on a rock,
 Th' impregnable disease their vain attempts did mock.
 They min'd it near ; they batter'd from afar
 With all the cannon of med'cinal war : 170

No gentle means could be essay'd :
 'Twas beyond parley when the siege was laid ;
 Th' extremest ways they first ordain,
 Prescribing such intolerable pain
 As none but Cæsar could sustain : 175

Undaunted Cæsar underwent
 The malice of their art, nor bent
 Beneath whate'er their pious rigour could invent.
 In five such days he suffer'd more
 Than any suffer'd in his reign before : 180

More, infinitely more, than he
 Against the worst of rebels could decree,
 A traitor, or twice-pardon'd enemy.
 Now Art was tir'd without success ;
 No racks could make the stubborn malady confess. 185

The vain insurers of life,
 And they who most perform'd and promis'd less,
 Ev'n Short and Hobbes forsook th' unequal strife.



Death and despair were in his looks ;
 No longer they consult their memories or books : 190
 Like helpless friends, who view from shore
 The lab'ring ship, and hear the tempest roar,
 So stood they with their arms across,
 Not to assist, but to deplore
 Th' inevitable loss. 195

VI.

Death was denounc'd, that frightful sound,
 Which e'en the best can hardly bear :
 He took the summons void of fear,
 And unconcern'dly cast his eyes around,
 As if to find and dare the grisly challenger. 200
 What death could do he lately try'd,
 When in four days he more than dy'd.
 The same assurance all his words did grace ;
 The same majestic mildness held its place,
 Nor lost the monarch in his dying face : 205
 Intrepid, pious, merciful, and brave,
 He look'd as when he conquer'd and forgave.

VII.

As if some angel had been sent
 To lengthen out his government,
 And to foretel as many years again 210
 As he had number'd in his happy reign ;
 So cheerfully he took the doom
 Of his departing breath,
 Nor shrunk, nor stepp'd aside for death ;
 But with unalter'd pace kept on, 215
 Providing for events to come,
 When he resign'd the throne.
 Still he maintain'd his kingly state,
 And grew familiar with his fate :
 Kind, good, and gracious, to the last, 220
 On all he lov'd before his dying beams he cast.
 Oh truly good and truly great,
 For glorious as he rose, benignly so he set !
 All that on earth he held most dear
 He recommended to his care, 225

To whom both heav'n
The right had giv'n,
And his own love bequeath'd supreme command :
He took and press'd that ever loyal hand,
Which could in peace secure his reign, 230
Which could in wars his pow'r maintain ;
That hand on which no plighted vows were ever vain.
Well, for so great a trust, he chose
A prince who never disobey'd,
Not when the most severe commands were laid ; 235
Nor want nor exile with his duty weigh'd ;
A prince on whom, if heav'n its eyes could close,
The welfare of the world it safely might repose.

VIII.

That king who liv'd to God's own heart,
Yet less serenely dy'd than he ; 240
Charles left behind no harsh decree,
For schoolmen with laborious art
To save from cruelty :
Those for whom love could no excuses frame,
He graciously forgot to name. 245
Thus far my muse, though rudely, has design'd
Some faint resemblance of his godlike mind ;
But neither pen or pencil can express,
The parting brother's tenderness :
Tho' that's a term too mean and low ; 250
(The bless'd above a kinder word may know ;)
But what they did and what they said,
The monarch who triumphant went,
The militant who staid,
Like painters, when their height'ning arts are spent, 256
I cast into a shade.
That all-forgiving king,
The type of Him above,
That inexhausted spring
Of clemency and love, 260
Himself to his next self accus'd,
And ask'd that pardon which he ne'er refus'd,
For faults not his, for guilt and crimes
Of godless men, and of rebellious times ;

For an hard exile, kindly meant, 265
 When his ungrateful country sent
 Their best Camillus into banishment; [sent.
 And forc'd their sov'reigns act, they could not his con-
 Oh how much rather had that injur'd chief
 Repeated all his suff'rings past, 270
 Than hear a pardon begg'd at last,
 Which giv'n could give the dying no relief!
 He bent, he sunk beneath his grief!
 His dauntless heart would fain have held
 From weeping, but his eyes rebell'd: 275
 Perhaps the godlike hero in his breast
 Disdain'd, or was asham'd to show
 So weak, so womanish a woe, [fest.
 Which yet the brother and the friend so plenteously con-

IX.

Amidst that silent shower the royal mind 280
 An easy passage found,
 And left its sacred earth behind;
 Nor murm'ring groan express'd, nor lab'ring sound,
 Nor any least tumultuous breath;
 Calm was his life, and quiet was his death: 285
 Soft as those gentle whispers were
 In which th' Almighty did appear;
 By the still voice the prophet knew him there.
 That peace which made thy prosp'rous reign to shine,
 That peace thou leav'st to thy imperial line, 290
 That peace, oh, happy shade, be ever thine!

X.

For all those joys thy restoration brought,
 For all the miracles it wrought,
 For all the healing balm thy mercy pour'd
 Into a nations bleeding wound, 295
 And care that after kept it sound:
 For num'rous blessings yearly show'r'd,
 And property with plenty crown'd;
 For freedom still maintain'd alive,
 Freedom, which in no other land will thrive, 300
 Freedom, an English subject's sole prerogative,

Without whose charms e'en peace would be
 But a dull quiet slavery ;
 For these, and more, accept our pious praise ;
 'Tis all the subsidy 305
 The present age can raise ;
 The rest is charg'd on late posterity :
 Posterity is charg'd the more,
 Because the large abounding store,
 To them, and to their heirs, is still entail'd by thee.
 Succession, of a long descent, 311
 Which chasteley in the channels ran,
 And from our demi-gods began,
 Equal almost to time in its extent :
 Thro' hazards numberless and great 315
 Thou hast deriv'd this mighty blessing down,
 And fix'd the fairest gem that decks th' imperial crown.
 Not faction, when it shook thy regal seat,
 Not senates insolently loud,
 (Those echoes of a thoughtless crowd) 320
 Not foreign or domestic treachery,
 Could warp thy soul to their unjust decree.
 So much thy foes thy manly mind mistook,
 Who judg'd it by the mildness of thy look ;
 Like a well-temper'd sword it bent at will, 325
 But kept the native toughness of the steel.

XI.

Be true, O Clio, to thy hero's name ;
 But draw him strictly so,
 That all who view the piece may know
 He needs no trappings of fictitious fame : 330
 The load's too weighty ; thou may'st chuse
 Some parts of praise and some refuse :
 Write, that his annals may be thought more lavish than
 In scanty truth thou hast confin'd [the Muse.
 The virtues of a royal mind, 335
 Forgiving, bounteous, humble, just, and kind :
 His conversation, wit, and parts,
 His knowledge in the noblest useful arts,

Were such dead authors could not give ;
 But habitudes of those who live, 340
 Who, lighting him, did greater lights receive :
 He drain'd from all, and all they knew ;
 His apprehension quick, his judgment true ;
 That the most learn'd with shame confess
 His knowledge more, his reading only less. 345

XII.

Amidst the peaceful triumph of his reign,
 What wonder if the kindly beams he shed
 Reviv'd the drooping arts again,
 If Science rais'd her head,
 And soft Humanity, that from Rebellion fled ? 350
 Our isle indeed too fruitful was before,
 But all uncultivated lay
 Out of the solar walk and heav'n's highway ;
 With rank Geneva weeds run o'er,
 And cockle at the best amidst the corn it bore. 355
 The royal husbandman appear'd,
 And plough'd, and sow'd, and till'd ;
 The thorns he rooted out, the rubbish clear'd,
 And bless'd th' obedient field ;
 When straight a double harvest rose, 360
 Such as the swarthy Indian mows,
 Or happier climates near the line,
 Or Paradise, manur'd and dress'd by hands divine.

XIII.

As when the new-born phoenix takes his way,
 His rich paternal regions to survey, 365
 Of airy choristers a num'rous train
 Attends his wond'rous progress o'er the plain ;
 So, rising from his father's urn,
 So glorious did our Charles return.
 Th' officious muses came along, 370
 A gay harmonious choir, like angels, ever young :
 The Muse that mourns him now his happy triumph
 E'en they could thrive in his auspicious reign, [sung.
 And such a plenteous crop they bore
 Of purest and well-winnow'd grain, 375

As Britain never knew before,
 Tho' little was their hire, and light their gain,
 Yet somewhat to their share he threw;
 Fed from his hand, they sung and flew,
 Like birds of Paradise, that liv'd on morning dew,
 Oh never let their lays his name forget! 381
 The pension of a prince's praise is great.
 Live then thou great encourager of arts,
 Live ever in our thankful hearts,
 Live blest'd above, almost invok'd below, 385
 Live, and receive this pious vow,
 Our patron once, our guardian angel now.
 Thou Fabius of a sinking state,
 Who didst by wise delays divert our fate,
 When faction, like a tempest, rose 390
 In death's most hideous form,
 Then art to rage thou didst oppose
 To weather out the storm:
 Not quitting thy supreme command,
 Thou heldst the rudder with a steady hand, 395
 Till safely on the shore the bark did land:
 The bark that all our blessings brought,
 Charg'd with thyself and James, a doubly royal freight.

XIV.

Oh frail estate of human things,
 And slippery hopes below! 400
 Now to our cost your emptiness we know;
 (For 'tis a lesson dearly bought)
 Assurance here is never to be fought.
 The best and best-belov'd of kings,
 And best deserving to be so, 405
 When scarce he had escaped the fatal blow
 Of faction and conspiracy,
 Death did his promis'd hopes destroy:
 He toil'd, he gain'd, but liv'd not to enjoy.
 What mists of Providence are these 410
 Thro' which we cannot see!
 So saints, by supernat'ral pow'r set free,
 Are left at last in martyrdom to die:
 Such is the end of oft-repeated miracles.

Forgive me, heav'n, that impious thought ; 415
 'Twas grief for Charles, to madness wrought,
 That question'd thy supreme decree !
 Thou didst his gracious reign prolong,
 E'en in thy saints' and angels' wrong,
 His fellow-citizens of immortality ; 420
 For twelve long years of exile borne,
 Twice twelve we number'd since his blest'd return :
 So strictly wert thou just to pay,
 E'en to the driblet of a day,
 Yet still we murmur, and complain 425
 The quails and manna should no longer rain :
 Those miracles 'twas needless to renew ;
 The chosen flock has now the promis'd land in view.

XV.

A warlike prince ascends the regal state,
 A prince long exercis'd by Fate : 430
 Long may he keep, tho' he obtains it late !
 Heroes in heav'n's peculiar mould are cast ;
 They and their poets are not form'd in haste :
 Man was the first in God's design, and man was made
 False heroes, made by flatt'ry so, [the last.
 Heav'n can strike out, like sparkles, at a blow ; 436
 But, ere a prince is to perfection brought,
 He costs Omnipotence a second thought.
 With toil and sweat,
 With hard'ning cold, and forming heat, 440
 The Cyclops did their strokes repeat
 Before th' impenetrable shield was wrought.
 It looks as if the maker would not own
 The noble work for his
 Before 'twas try'd and found a masterpiece. 445

XVI.

View then a monarch ripen'd for a throne,
 Alcides thus his race began,
 O'er infancy he swiftly ran ;
 The future god at first was more than man ;
 Dangers and toils, and Juno's hate, 450
 E'en o'er his cradle lay in wait,
 And there he grappled first with fate ;



Drawn by R. Carbould, Engraved by G. Warren.

DRYDEN'S POEMS.

the drowsy Genius wakes,
Of Britain, long entranc'd in charms,
Restiff, and slumbring on its arms;
Tis rous'd & with a new strong nerve the spear already shakes.

Vide Threnodia Augustalis Volume I. Page 107. line 170.

Printed for C. Cook, Nov. 17, 1798.

In his young hands the hissing snakes he press'd ;
 So early was the deity confess'd :
 Thus by degrés he rose to Jove's imperial seat ; 455
 Thus difficulties prove a soul legitimately great.
 Like his our hero's infancy was try'd ;
 Betimes the furies did their snakes provide,
 And to his infant arms oppose
 His father's rebels, and his brother's foes ; 460
 The more oppress'd, the higher still he rose:
 Those were the preludes of his fate,
 That form'd his manhood, to subdue
 The hydra of the many-headed hissing crew.

XVII.

As after Numa's peaceful reign 465
 The martial Ancus did the sceptre wield,
 Furbish'd the rusty sword again,
 Resum'd the long forgotten shield,
 And led the Latins to the dusty field :
 So James the drowsy Genius wakes 470
 Of Britain, long entranc'd in charms,
 Restiff, and slumb'ring on its arms :
 'Tis rous'd, and with a new-strung nerve the spear al-
 To neighing of the warrior steeds, [ready shakes.
 No drum or louder trumpet needs 475
 T' inspire the coward, warm the cold ;
 His voice, his sole appearance, makes them bold.
 Gaul and Batavia dread th' impending blow ;
 Too well the vigour of that arm they know ;
 They lick the dust, and crouch beneath their fatal foe.
 Long may they fear this awful prince, 481
 And not provoke his ling'ring sword ;
 Peace is their only sure defence,
 Their best security his word.
 In all the changes of his doubtful state, 485
 His truth, like heav'ns, was kept inviolate :
 For him to promise is to make it fate.
 His valour can triumph o'er land and main :
 With broken oaths his fame he will not stain, 489
 With conquest basely bought, and with inglorious gain.

XVIII.

For once, O heav'n, unfold thy adamantine book ;
 And let his wond'ring senate see,
 If not thy firm immutable decree,
 At least the second page of strong contingency,
 Such as consists with wills originally free.

495

Let them with glad amazement look
 On what their happiness may be ;
 Let them not still be obstinately blind,
 Still to divert the good thou hast design'd,
 Or with malignant penury,

500

To starve the royal virtues of his mind.
 Faith is a christian's and a subject's test ;
 Oh, give them to believe, and they are surely blest !

They do ; and with a distant view I see

505

Th' amended vows of English loyalty :
 And all beyond that object there appears
 The long retinue of a prosp'rous reign,
 A series of successful years,

In orderly array a martial manly train.

510

Behold e'en the remoter shores

A conqu'ring navy proudly spread ;
 The British cannon formidably roars,
 While starting from his oozy bed,

Th' asserted ocean rears his rev'rend head,
 To view and recognize his ancient lord again,

515

And with a willing hand restores
 The fasces of the main.

518



ON THE DEATH OF OLIVER CROMWELL.

WRITTEN AFTER HIS FUNERAL.

AND now 'tis time ; for their officious haste
Who would before have borne him to the sky,
Like eager Romans, ere all rites were past,
Did let too soon the sacred eagle fly.

4

II.

Tho' our best notes are treason to his fame,
Join'd with the loud applause of public voice :
Since heav'n, what praise we offer to his name,
Hath render'd too authentic by his choice.

8

III.

Tho' in his praise no man can lib'ral be,
Since they whose muses have the highest flown
Add not to his immortal memory,
But do an act of friendship to their own :

12

IV.

Yet 'tis our duty and our interest too
Such monuments as we can build to raise,
Lest all the world prevent what we should do,
And claim a title in him by their praise.

16

V.

How shall I then begin, or where conclude,
To draw a fame so truly circular ?
For in a round what order can be shew'd
Where all the parts so equal perfect are ?

20

VI.

His grandeur he deriv'd from heav'n alone ;
For he was great ere fortune made him so :
And wars, like mists that rise against the sun,
Made him but greater seem, not greater grow.

24

VII.

No borrow'd bays his temples did adorn,
But to our crown he did fresh jewels bring ;
Nor was his virtue poison'd soon as born
With the too early thoughts of being king.

28

VIII.

Fortune, that easy mistress to the young,
But to her ancient servants coy and hard,
Him at that age her fav'rites rank'd among,
When she her best-lov'd Pompey did discard.

32

IX.

He private mark'd the faults of others' sway,
And set as seamarks for himself to shun:
Not like rash monarchs, who their youth betray
By acts their age too late would wish undone.

36

X.

And yet dominion was not his design;
We owe that blessing not to him but heav'n,
Which to fair acts unsought rewards did join,
Rewards that less to him than us were giv'n.

40

XI.

Our former chiefs, like sticklers of the war,
First fought t'inflame the parties, then to poise;
The quarrel lov'd, but did the cause abhor,
And did not strike to hurt, but make a noise.

44

XII.

War, our consumption, was their gainful trade:
We inward bled whilst they prolong'd our pain;
He fought to end our fighting, and essay'd
To staunch the blood by breathing of the vein.

48

XIII.

Swift and resistless thro' the land he pass'd,
Like the bold Greek who did the east subdue,
And made to battles such heroic haste,
As if on wings of victory he flew.

52

XIV.

He fought secure of fortune as of fame:
Still by new maps the island might be shown
Of conquests, which he strew'd where'er he came,
Thick as the Galaxy with stars is sown.

56

XV.

His palms, tho' under weights they did not stand,
Still thriv'd; no winter could his laurels fade;
Heav'n in his portrait shew'd a workman's hand,
And drew it perfect, yet without a shade.

60

XVI.

Peace was the prize of all his toil and care,
Which war had banish'd, and did now restore:
Bologna's walls thus mounted in the air,
To seat themselves more surely than before. 64

XVII.

Her safety rescu'd Ireland to him owes;
And treach'rous Scotland, to no int'rest true,
Yet blest'd that fate which did his arms dispose
Her land to civilize as to subdue. 68

XVIII.

Nor was he like those stars which only shine
When to pale mariners they storms portend;
He had his calmer influence, and his mien
Did love and majesty together blend. 72

XIX.

'Tis true his count'nance did imprint an awe,
And nat'rally all souls to his did bow,
As wands of divination downward draw,
And point to beds where sov'reign gold doth grow. 76

XX.

When past all off'rings to Feretrian Jove,
He Mars depos'd, and arms to gowns made yield,
Successful councils did him soon approve
As fit for close intrigues as open field. 80

XXI.

To suppliant Holland he vouchsaf'd a peace,
Our once bold rival of the British main,
Now tamely glad her unjust claim to cease,
And buy our friendship with her idol, gain. 84

XXII.

Fame of th' asserted sea through Europe blown,
Made France and Spain ambitious of his love;
Each knew that side must conquer he would own,
And for him fiercely as for empire strove. 88

XXIII.

No sooner was the Frenchman's cause embrac'd,
Than the light Mounseur the grave Don outweigh'd;
His fortune turn'd the scale where'er 'twas cast,
Tho' Indian mines were in the other laid. 92

XXIV.

When absent, yet we conquer'd in his right;
 For tho' some meaner artist's skill were shown
 In mingling colours, or in placing light,
 Yet still the fair designment was his own.

96

XXV.

For from all tempers he could service draw;
 The worth of each with its alloy he knew,
 And, as the confidant of nature, saw
 How she complexions did divide and brew.

100

XXVI.

Or he their single virtues did survey,
 By intuition in his own large breast,
 Where all the rich ideas of them lay,
 That were the rule and measure to the rest.

104

XXVII.

When such heroic virtue heav'n sets out,
 The stars, like commons, sullenly obey;
 Because it drains them when it comes about,
 And therefore is a tax they seldom pay.

108

XXVIII.

From this high spring our foreign conquests flow,
 Which yet more glorious triumphs do portend;
 Since their commencement to his arms they owe,
 If springs as high as fountains may ascend.

112

XXIX.

He made us freemen of the continent,
 Whom nature did like captives treat before;
 To nobler preys the English lion sent,
 And taught him first in Belgian walks to roar.

116

XXX.

The old unquestion'd pirate of the land,
 Proud Rome, with dread the fate of Dunkirk heard,
 And, trembling, wish'd behind more Alps to stand,
 Altho' an Alexander were her guard.

120

XXXI.

By his command we boldly cross'd the line,
 And bravely fought where southern stars arise;
 We trac'd the far-fetch'd gold unto the mine,
 And that which brib'd our fathers made our prize.

124

XXXII.

Such was our prince ; yet own'd a soul above
 The highest acts it could produce to show :
 Thus poor mechanic arts in public move,
 While the deep secrets beyond practice go.

128

XXXIII.

Nor dy'd he when his ebbing fame went less,
 But when fresh laurels courted him to live ;
 He seem'd but to prevent some new success,
 As if above what triumphs earth could give.

132

XXXIV.

His latest victories still thickest came,
 As near the centre motion doth increase ;
 Till he, press'd down by his own weighty name,
 Did like the vestal under spoils decease.

136

XXXV.

But first the ocean as a tribute sent
 That giant prince of all her wat'ry herd ;
 And th' isle, when her protecting genius went,
 Upon his obsequies loud sighs conferr'd.

140

XXXVI.

No civil broils have since his death arose,
 But faction now by habit does obey,
 And wars have that respect for his repose
 As winds for halcyons when they breed at sea.

144

XXXVII.

His ashes in a peaceful urn shall rest ;
 His name a great example stands, to show
 How strangely high endeavours may be blest,
 Where piety and valour jointly go.

148



SATIRE ON THE DUTCH.

WRITTEN IN THE YEAR M.DC.XLII.

A S needy gallants, in the scriv'ner's hands, [lands,
 Court the rich knaves that gripe their mortgag'd
 The first fat buck of all the season's sent,
 And keeper takes no fee in compliment;
 The dotage of some Englishmen is such
 To fawn on those who ruin them, the Dutch. 5
 They shall have all, rather than make a war
 With those who of the same religion are.
 The Streights, the Guinea trade, the herrings too;
 Nay, to keep friendship, they shall pickle you. 10
 Some are resolv'd not to find out the cheat,
 But, cuckold-like, love them that do the feat.
 What injuries foe'er upon us fall,
 Yet still the same religion answers all.
 Religion wheedled us to civil war, 15
 Drew English blood, and Dutchmen's now would spare.
 Be gull'd no longer; for you'll find it true,
 They have no more religion, faith! than you.
 Int'rest's the god they worship in their state,
 And we I take it have not much of that. 20
 Well monarchies may own religion's name,
 But states are atheists in their very frame.
 They share a sin, and such proportions fall,
 That, like a stink, 'tis nothing to them all,
 Think on their rapine, falshood, cruelty, 25
 And that what once they were they still would be.
 To one well born the affront is worse and more,
 When he's abus'd and baffled by a boor.
 With an ill grace the Dutch their mischiefs do;
 They've both ill nature and ill manners too. 30
 Well may they boast themselves an ancient nation,
 For they were bred ere manners were in fashion;
 And their new commonwealth has set them free
 Only from honour and civility.
 Venetians do not more uncouthly ride 35
 Than did their lumber state mankind bestride.

Their sway became 'em with as ill a mien
As their own paunches swell above their chin.
Yet is their empire no true growth but humour,
And only two kings' touch can cure the tumour. 40
As Cato fruits of Afric did display,
Let us before our eyes their Indies lay;
All loyal English will like him conclude,
Let Cæsar live, and Carthage be subdu'd. 44



ABSALOM AND ACHITHOPHEL.

A POEM.

IN TWO PARTS.

TO THE READER.

IT is not my intention to make an apology for my poem; some will think it needs no excuse, and others will receive none. The design I am sure is honest; but he who draws his pen for one party must expect to make enemies of the other: for wit and fool are consequents of Whig and Tory; and every man is a knave or an ass to the contrary side. There is a treasury of merits in the fanatic church, as well as in the popish, and a pennyworth to be had of saintship, honesty, and poetry, for the lewd, the factious, and the blockheads: but the longest chapter in Deuteronomy has not curses enough for an Anti-Bromingham. My comfort is, their manifest prejudice to my cause will render their judgment of less authority against me. Yet if a poem have genius, it will force its own reception in the world: for there is a sweetness in good verse which tickles even while it hurts; and no man can be heartily angry with him who pleases him against his will. The commendation of adversaries is the greatest triumph of a writer, because it never comes unless extorted. But I can be satisfied on more easy terms; if I happen to please the more moderate sort, I shall be sure of an honest party, and in all probability of the best judges; for the least concerned are commonly the least corrupt. And I confess I have laid in for those, by rebating the satire (where justice would allow it) from carrying too sharp an edge. They who can criticise so weakly as to imagine I have done my worst, may be convinced, at their own cost, that I can write severely with more ease than I can gently. I have but laughed at some men's follies, when I could have declaimed against their vices; and other men's virtues I have commended as freely as I have taxed their crimes. And now, if you are a ma-

licious reader, I expect you should return upon me, that I affect to be thought more impartial than I am. But if men are not to be judged by their professions, God forgive you commonwealth's men for professing so plausibly for the government. You cannot be so unconscionable as to charge me for not subscribing my name; for that would reflect too grossly upon your own party, who never dare, though they have the advantage of a jury to secure them. If you like not my poem, the fault may possibly be in my writing, though it is hard for an author to judge against himself; but more probably it is in your morals, which cannot bear the truth of it. The violent on both sides will condemn the character of Absalom, as either too favourably or too hardly drawn: but they are not the violent whom I desire to please. The fault, on the other hand, is to extenuate, palliate, and indulge; and, to confess freely, I have endeavoured to commit it. Besides the respect which I owe his birth, I have a greater for his heroic virtues; and David himself could not be more tender of the young man's life than I would be of his reputation. But since the most excellent natures are always the most easy, and as being such, are the soonest perverted by ill counsels, especially when baited with fame and glory, it is no more a wonder that he withstood not the temptations of Achithophel, than it was for Adam not to have resisted the two devils, the serpent, and the woman. The conclusion of the story I purposely forbore to prosecute, because I could not obtain from myself to shew Absalom unfortunate. The frame of it was cut out but for a picture to the waist, and if the draught be so far true, it is as much as I designed.

Were I the inventor, who am only the historian, I should certainly conclude the piece with the reconciliation of Absalom to David; and who knows but this may come to pass; things were not brought to an extremity where I left the story; there seems yet to be room left for a composure, hereafter there may be only for pity. I have not so much as an uncharitable wish against

Achithophel, but am content to be accused of a good-natured error, and to hope, with Origen, that the devil himself may at last be saved: for which reason, in this poem, he is neither brought to set his house in order, nor to dispose of his person afterwards as he in wisdom shall think fit. God is infinitely merciful, and his vicegerent is only not so, because he is not infinite.

The true end of satire is the amendment of vices by correction; and he who writes honestly is no more an enemy to the offender than the physician to the patient, when he prescribes harsh remedies to an inveterate disease; for those are only in order to prevent the surgeon's work of an *ense rescindendum*, which I wish not to my very enemies. To conclude all, if the body politic have any analogy to the natural, in my weak judgment, an act of oblivion were as necessary in a hot-distempered state as an opiate would be in a raging fever.



A KEY

TO

ABSALOM AND ACHITHOPHEL.

Abdaal,	{ General Monk, Duke of Albe- marle.
Abethdin,	{ The name given, through this Poem, to a Lord Chancellor in general.
Abfalom,	{ Duke of Monmouth, natural son of King Charles II.
Achithophel,	{ Anthony-Ashly Cooper, Earl of Shaftesbury.
Adriel,	John Sheffield, Earl of Mulgrave.
Agag,	Sir Edmundbury Godfrey.
Amiel,	{ Mr. Seymour, Speaker of the House of Commons.
Amri,	{ Sir Heneage Finch, Earl of Win- chelsea, and Lord Chancellor.
Annabel,	Duchess of Monmouth.
Arod,	Sir William Waller.
Afaph,	{ A character drawn by Tate for Dryden, in the Second Part of this Poem.
Balaam,	Earl of Huntingdon.
Balak,	Barnet.
Barzillai,	Duke of Ormond.
Bathsheba,	Duchess of Portsmouth.
Benaiah,	General Sackville.
Ben Jochanan,	Rev. Mr. Samuel Johnson.
Bezaliel,	Duke of Beaufort.
Caleb,	Ford, Lord Grey, of Werk.
Corah,	Dr. Titus Oates.
David,	King Charles II.
Doeg,	Elkanah Settle, the City poet.
Egypt,	France.
Eliab,	{ Sir Henry Bennet, Earl of Ar- lington.
Ethnic plot,	The Popish Plot.

Gath,	{ The Land of Exile, more particularly Brussels, where King Charles II. long resided.
Hebron,	Scotland.
Hebrew priests,	The Church of England Clergy.
Helon,	{ Earl of Feversham, a Frenchman by birth, and nephew to Marshal Turenne.
Hushai,	Hyde, Earl of Rochester.
Jebusites,	Papists.
Jerusalem,	London.
Jews,	English.
Jonas,	Sir Wm. Jones, a great lawyer.
Jordan,	Dover.
Jotham,	Saville, Marquis of Halifax.
Jothran,	Lord Dartmouth.
Ishboseth,	Richard Cromwell.
Israel,	England.
Isshachar,	{ Thomas Thynne, Esq. who was shot in his coach.
Judas,	Mr. Ferguson, a canting teacher.
Ishban,	{ Sir Robert Clayton, Alderman, and one of the City Members.
Mephibosheth,	Pordage.
Michal,	Catharine, Queen of Charles II.
Nadab,	Lord Howard of Eserick.
Og,	Shadwell.
Othniel,	{ Henry Duke of Grafton, natural Son of King Charles II. by the Duchess of Cleveland.
Phaleg,	Forbes.
Pharaoh,	King of France.
Rabsheka,	{ Sir Thomas Player, one of the City Members.
Sagan of Jerusalem,	{ Dr. Compton, Bishop of London, youngest son to the Earl of Northampton.
Sanhedrim,	Parliament.
Saul,	Oliver Cromwell.

Shimei,	{ Slingsby Bethel, Sheriff of Lon-
	don in 1680.
Sheva,	Sir Roger L'Estrange,
Sion,	England.
Solymean Rout,	London Rebels.
Tyre,	Holland.
Uzza,	Jack Hall.
Zadoc,	{ Sancroft, Archbishop of Can-
	terbury.
Zaken,	{ A Member of the House of
	Commons.
Zimri,	Villiers, Duke of Buckingham.
Ziloah,	{ Sir John Moore, Lord Mayor
	in 1682.



ABSALOM AND ACHITHOPHEL.

PART I.

-----Si propius stes,
Te capiet magis-----

HOR.

IN pious times, ere priestcraft did begin,
 Before polygamy was made a sin,
 When man on many multiply'd his kind,
 Ere one to one was curfedly confin'd,
 When nature prompted, and no law deny'd 5
 Promiscuous use of concubine and bride;
 Then Isr'els monarch, after heav'n's own heart,
 His vig'rous warmth did variously impart
 To wives and slaves, and, wide as his command,
 Scatter'd his maker's image through the land. 10
 Michal, of royal blood, the crown did wear,
 A foil ungrateful to the tiller's care:
 Not so the rest; for several mothers bore
 To godlike David several sons before:
 But since like slaves his bed they did ascend, 15
 No true succession could their seed attend,
 Of all the num'rous progeny was none
 So beautiful, so brave, as Absalom:
 Whether inspir'd by some diviner lust,
 His father got him with a greater gust, 20
 Or that his conscious destiny made way,
 By manly beauty, to imperial sway;
 Early in foreign fields he won renown,
 With kings and states ally'd to Isr'el's crown:
 In peace the thoughts of war he could remove, 25
 And seem as he were only born for love.
 Whate'er he did was done with so much ease,
 In him alone 'twas natural to please:
 His motions all accompany'd with grace,
 And Paradise was open'd in his face. 30
 With secret joy indulgent David view'd
 His youthful image in his son renew'd;
 To all his wishes nothing he deny'd,
 And made the charming Annabel his bride.

What faults he had (for who from faults is free?) 35
 His father could not, or he would not, see.
 Some warm excesses which the law forbore,
 Were constru'd youth, that purg'd by boiling o'er;
 And Amnon's murder, by a specious name,
 Was call'd a just revenge for injur'd fame. 40
 Thus prais'd and lov'd, the noble youth remain'd,
 While David undisturb'd in Sion reign'd.
 But life can never be sincerely blest,
 Heav'n punishes the bad, and proves the best.
 The Jews, a headstrong, moody, murm'ring race, 45
 As ever try'd th' extent and stretch of grace;
 God's pamper'd people, whom, debauch'd with ease,
 No king could govern, nor no God could please;
 (Gods they had try'd of every shape and size
 That god-smiths could produce, or priests devise:) 50
 These Adam-wits, too fortunately free,
 Began to dream they wanted liberty;
 And when no rule, no precedent, was found
 Of men by laws less circumscrib'd and bound,
 They led their wild desires to woods and caves, 55
 And thought that all but savages were slaves.
 They who, when Saul was dead, without a blow
 Made foolish Ishbosheth the crown forego;
 Who banish'd David did from Hebron bring,
 And with a general shout proclaim'd him king; 60
 Those very Jews, who, at their very best,
 Their humour more than loyalty exprest,
 Now wonder'd why so long they had obey'd
 An idol monarch which their hands had made;
 Thought they might ruin him they could create, 65
 Or melt him to that golden calf, a state.
 But these were random bolts; no form'd design,
 Nor int'rest made the factious crowd to join:
 The sober part of Isr'el, free from stain,
 Well knew the value of a peaceful reign; 70
 And looking backward with a wise affright,
 Saw seams of wounds, dishonest to the sight;
 In contemplation of whose ugly scars
 They curs'd the memory of civil wars.

The moderate sort of men thus qualify'd, 75
 Inclined the balance to the better side;
 And David's mildness manag'd it so well
 The bad found no occasion to rebel.
 But when to sin our bias'd nature leans,
 The careful dev'l is still at hand with means, 80
 And providently pimps for ill desires;
 The good old cause reviv'd, a plot requires.
 Plots, true or false, are necessary things
 To raise up commonwealths and ruin kings.
 Th' inhabitants of old Jerusalem 85
 Were Jebusites; the town so called from them,
 And theirs the native right——
 But when the chosen people grew more strong,
 The rightful cause at length became the wrong;
 And ev'ry loss the men of Jebus bore 90
 They still were thought God's enemies the more.
 Thus worn or weaken'd, well or ill content,
 Submit they must to David's government:
 Impoverish'd and depriv'd of all command,
 Their taxes doubled as they lost their land: 95
 And what was harder yet to flesh and blood,
 Their gods disgrac'd and burnt like common wood.
 This set the heathen priesthood in a flame;
 For priests of all religions are the same.
 Of whatsoe'er descent their godhead be, 100
 Stock, stone, or other homely pedigree,
 In his defence his servants are as bold
 As if he had been born of beaten gold.
 The Jewish rabbins, though their enemies,
 In this conclude them honest men and wise; 105
 For 'twas their duty, all the learned think,
 T'espouse his cause by whom they eat and drink.
 From hence began that plot, the nation's curse,
 Bad in itself, but represented worse;
 Rais'd in extremes, and in extremes decry'd; 110
 With oaths affirm'd, with dying vows deny'd;
 Not weigh'd nor winnow'd by the multitude,
 But swallow'd in the mass unchew'd and crude.

Some truth there was, but dash'd and brew'd with lies,
 To please the fools, and puzzle all the wise, 115
 Succeeding times did equal folly call,
 Believing nothing, or believing all.

Th' Egyptian rites the Jebusites embrac'd,
 Where gods were recommended by their taste.
 Such fav'ry deities must needs be good 120

As serv'd at once for worship and for food.
 By force they could not introduce these gods;
 For ten to one in former days was odds.
 So fraud was us'd, (the sacrificer's trade)
 Fools are more hard to conquer than persuade. 125

Their busy teachers mingled with the Jews,
 And rak'd for converts ev'n the court and stews;
 Which Hebrew priests the more unkindly took,
 Because the fleece accompanies the flock.

Some thought they God's anointed meant to slay 130
 By guns, invented since full many a day:

Our author swears it not; but who can know
 How far the dev'l and Jebusites may go?
 This plot, which fail'd for want of common sense,
 Had yet a deep and dang'rous consequence; 135

For as when raging fevers boil the blood,
 The standing lake soon floats into a flood,
 And ev'ry hostile humour, which before
 Slept quiet in its channels, bubbles o'er;
 So several factions, from this first ferment, 140

Work up to foam, and threat the government.
 Some by their friends, more by themselves thought wise,
 Oppos'd the pow'r to which they could not rise:
 Some had in courts been great, and thrown from thence,
 Like fiends, were harden'd in impenitence: 145

Some, by their monarch's fatal mercy, grown
 From pardon'd rebels kinsmen to the throne,
 Were rais'd in pow'r and public office high,
 Strong bands, if bands ungrateful men could tie.

Of these the false Achithophel was first, 150
 A name to all succeeding ages curst:
 For close designs and crooked counsels fit,
 Sagacious, bold, and turbulent of wit;

Restless, unfix'd in principles and place,
In pow'r unpleas'd, impatient of disgrace; 155
A fiery soul, which, working out its way,
Fretted the pigmy body to decay,
And o'er-inform'd the tenement of clay.
A daring pilot in extremity;
Pleas'd with the danger, when the waves went high
He sought the storm; but, for a calm unfit, 161
Would steer too nigh the sands to boast his wit.
Great wits are sure to madness near ally'd,
And thin partitions do their bounds divide;
Else why should he, with wealth and honour blest,
Refuse his age the needful hours of rest? 166
Punish a body which he could not please;
Bankrupt of life, yet prodigal of ease:
And all to leave what with his toil he won
To that unfeather'd, two-legg'd thing, a son: 170
Got while his soul did huddled notions try,
And born a shapeless lump, like anarchy.
In friendship false, implacable in hate,
Resolv'd to ruin or to rule the state.
To compass this the triple bond he broke, 175
The pillars of the public safety shook,
And fitted Isr'el for a foreign yoke;
Then seiz'd with fear, yet still affecting fame,
Usurp'd a patriot's all-atoning name:
So easy still it proves, in factious times, 180
With public zeal to cancel private crimes.
How safe is treason, and how sacred ill,
Where none can sin against the people's will?
Where crowds can wink, and no offence be known,
Since in another's guilt they find their own? 185
Yet fame deserv'd no enemy can grudge;
The statesman we abhor, but praise the judge.
In Isr'el's courts ne'er sat an Abethdin
With more discerning eyes, or hands more clean;
Unbrib'd, unsought, the wretched to redress, 190
Swift of dispatch, and easy of access.
Oh! had he been content to serve the crown
With virtues only proper to the gown,

Or had the rankness of the soil been freed
 From cockle that oppress'd the noble seed, 195
 David for him his tuneful harp had strung,
 And heav'n had wanted one immortal song.
 But wild Ambition loves to slide, not stand,
 And Fortune's ice prefers to Virtue's land.
 Achithophel, grown weary, to possess 200
 A lawful fame, and lazy happiness,
 Disdain'd the golden fruit to gather free,
 And lent the crowd his arm to shake the tree.
 Now, manifest of crimes contriv'd long since,
 He stood at bold defiance with his prince; 205
 Held up the buckler of the people's cause
 Against the crown, and skulk'd behind the laws.
 The wish'd occasion of the plot he takes,
 Some circumstances finds, but more he makes;
 By buzzing emissaries fills the ears 210
 Of list'ning crowds with jealousies and fears
 Of arbitrary counsels brought to light,
 And proves the king himself a Jebusite.
 Weak arguments! which yet he knew full well
 Were strong with people easy to rebel: 215
 For govern'd by the moon, the giddy Jews
 Tread the same track when she the prime renews;
 And once in twenty years, their scribes record,
 By natural instinct they change their lord.
 Achithophel still wants a chief, and none 220
 Was found so fit as warlike Absalom:
 Not that he wish'd his greatness to create,
 (For politicians neither love nor hate)
 But, for he knew his title not allow'd,
 Would keep him still depending on the crowd; 225
 That kingly pow'r, thus ebbing out, might be
 Drawn to the dregs of a democracy.
 Him he attempts, with study'd arts, to please,
 And sheds his venom in such words as these:
 "Auspicious prince, at whose nativity 230
 "Some royal planet rul'd the southern sky,
 "Thy longing country's darling and desire,
 "Their cloudy pillar and their guardian fire;

- “ Their second Moses, whose extended wand
“ Divides the seas and shews the promis'd land ; 235
“ Whose dawning day, in every distant age,
“ Has exercis'd the sacred prophet's rage :
“ The people's pray'r, the glad diviner's theme,
“ The young men's vision, and the old men's dream !
“ Thee, Saviour, thee the nation's vows confess, 240
“ And never satisfy'd with seeing, bless :
“ Swift unbespoken pomps thy steps proclaim,
“ And stamm'ring babes are taught to lisp thy name ;
“ How long wilt thou the gen'ral joy detain,
“ Starve and defraud the people of thy reign ; 245
“ Content ingloriously to pass thy days
“ Like one of Virtue's fools that feed on praise :
“ Till thy fresh glories, which now shine so bright,
“ Grow stale and tarnish with our daily sight ?
“ Believe me, royal youth ! thy fruit must be 250
“ Or gather'd ripe, or rot upon the tree ;
“ Heav'n has to all allotted, soon or late,
“ Some lucky revolution of their fate ;
“ Whose motions, if we watch and guide with skill,
“ (For human good depends on human will) 255
“ Our fortune rolls as from a smooth descent,
“ And from the first impression takes the bent ;
“ But, if unseiz'd, she glides away like wind,
“ And leaves repenting folly far behind.
“ Now, now she meets you with a glorious prize, 260
“ And spreads her locks before you as she flies.
“ Had thus old David, from whose loins you spring,
“ Not dar'd, when Fortune call'd him to be king,
“ At Gath an exile he might still remain,
“ And heav'n's anointing oil had been in vain. 265
“ Let his successful youth your hopes engage,
“ But shun th' example of declining age ;
“ Behold him setting in his western skies,
“ The shadows length'ning as the vapours rise.
“ He is not now as when, on Jordan's sand, 270
“ The joyful people throng'd to see him land,
“ Cov'ring the beach, and black'ning all the strand ;

“ But, like the prince of angels, from his height
 “ Comes tumbling downward with diminish’d light,
 “ Betray’d by one poor plot to public scorn, 275
 “ (Our only blessing since his curs’d return)
 “ Those heaps of people, which one sheaf did bind,
 “ Blown off, and scatter’d by a puff of wind.
 “ What strength can he to your designs oppose,
 “ Naked of friends, and round beset with foes? 280
 “ If Pharaoh’s doubtful succour he should use,
 “ A foreign aid would more incense the Jews;
 “ Proud Egypt would dissembled friendship bring,
 “ Foment the war, but not support the king;
 “ Nor would the royal party e’er unite 285
 “ With Pharaoh’s arms t’ assist the Jebusite;
 “ Or if they should, their int’rest soon would break,
 “ And with such odious aid make David weak.
 “ All sorts of men, by my successful arts,
 “ Abhorring kings, estrange their alter’d hearts 290
 “ From David’s rule; and ’tis their general cry,
 “ Religion, commonwealth, and liberty.
 “ If you, as champion of the public good,
 “ Add to their arms a chief of royal blood,
 “ What may not Isr’el hope, and what applause 295
 “ Might such a general gain by such a cause?
 “ Not barren praise alone, that gaudy flow’r,
 “ Fair only to the sight, but solid pow’r;
 “ And nobler is a limited command,
 “ Giv’n by the love of all your native land, 300
 “ Than a successive title, long and dark,
 “ Drawn from the mouldy rolls of Noah’s ark.”

What cannot praise effect in mighty minds,
 When Flatt’ry soothes, and when Ambition blinds?
 Desire of pow’r, on earth a vicious weed, 305
 Yet, sprung from high, is of celestial seed:
 In God ’tis glory; and when men aspire,
 ’Tis but a spark too much of heav’nly fire.
 Th’ ambitious youth, too covetous of fame,
 Too full of angels’ metal in his frame, 310
 Unwarily was led from Virtue’s ways,
 Made drunk with honour, and debauch’d with praise:

Half loath and half consenting to the ill,
 (For royal blood within him struggl'd still)
 He thus reply'd:—"And what pretence have I 315
 "To take up arms for public liberty?
 "My father governs with unquestion'd right,
 "The faith's defender, and mankind's delight;
 "Good, gracious, just, observant of the laws,
 "And heav'n by wonders has espous'd his cause. 320
 "Whom has he wrong'd in all his peaceful reign?
 "Who sues for justice to his throne in vain?
 "What millions has he pardon'd of his foes,
 "Whom just revenge did to his wrath expose?
 "Mild, easy, humble, studious of our good, 325
 "Inclin'd to mercy, and averse from blood.
 "If mildness ill with stubborn Israel suit,
 "His crime is God's beloved attribute.
 "What could he gain his people to betray,
 "Or change his right for arbitrary sway? 330
 "Let haughty Pharaoh curse with such a reign
 "His fruitful Nile, and yoke a servile train.
 "If David's rule Jerusalem displease,
 "The dogstar heats their brains to this disease.
 "Why then should I, encouraging the bad, 335
 "Turn rebel, and run popularly mad?
 "Were he a tyrant, who by lawless might
 "Oppress'd the Jews, and rais'd the Jebusite,
 "Well might I mourn; but Nature's holy bands
 "Would curb my spirits and restrain my hands: 340
 "The people might assert their liberty;
 "But what was right in them were crime in me.
 "His favour leaves me nothing to require,
 "Prevents my wishes, and outruns desire:
 "What more can I expect while David lives? 345
 "All but his kingly diadem he gives:
 "And that,"—but here he paus'd; then, sighing, said—
 "Is justly destin'd for a worthier head.
 "For when my father from his toils shall rest,
 "And late augment the number of the blest, 350
 "His lawful issue shall the throne ascend,
 "Or the collat'ral line, where that shall end,

“ His brother, tho’ oppress’d with vulgar spite,
 “ Yet dauntless, and secure of native right,
 “ Of ev’ry royal virtue stands possess’d, 355
 “ Still dear to all the bravest and the best :
 “ His courage foes, his friends his truth proclaim,
 “ His loyalty the king, the world his fame :
 “ His mercy e’en th’ offending crowd will find,
 “ For sure he comes of a forgiving kind. 360
 “ Why should I then repine at heav’n’s decree,
 “ Which gives me no pretence to royalty ?
 “ Yet, oh that fate, propitiously inclin’d,
 “ Had rais’d my birth, or had debas’d my mind ;
 “ To my large soul not all her treasure lent, 365
 “ And then betray’d it to a mean descent !
 “ I find, I find my mounting spirits bold,
 “ And David’s part disdains my mother’s mould.
 “ Why am I scanted by a niggard birth ?
 “ My soul disclaims the kindred of her earth, 370
 “ And, made for empire, whispers me within,
 “ Desire of greatness is a godlike sin.”

Him stagg’ring so, when hell’s dire agent found,
 While fainting Virtue scarce maintain’d her ground,
 He pours fresh forces in, and thus replies : 375

“ Th’ eternal God, supremely good and wise,
 “ Imparts not these prodigious gifts in vain :
 “ What wonders are reserv’d to bless your reign ?
 “ Against your will your arguments have shown,
 “ Such virtue’s only giv’n to guide a throne ; 380
 “ Not that your father’s mildness I contemn,
 “ But manly force becomes the diadem.
 “ ’Tis true he grants the people all they crave,
 “ And more perhaps than subjects ought to have ;
 “ For lavish grants suppose a monarch tame, 385
 “ And more his goodness than his wit proclaim :
 “ But when should people strive their bonds to break,
 “ If not when kings are negligent or weak ?
 “ Let him give on till he can give no more,
 “ The thrifty sanhedrim shall keep him poor ; 390
 “ And ev’ry shekel which he can receive,
 “ Shall cost a limb of his prerogative.

“ To ply him with new plots shall be my care,
“ Or plunge him deep in some expensive war,
“ Which, when his treasure can no more supply, 395
“ He must, with the remains of kingship, buy
“ His faithful friends, our jealousies and fears,
“ Call Jebusites, and Pharaoh’s pensioners,
“ Whom, when our fury from his aid has torn,
“ He shall be naked left to public scorn. 400
“ The next successor, whom I fear and hate,
“ My arts have made obnoxious to the state,
“ Turn’d all his virtues to his overthrow,
“ And gain’d our elders to pronounce a foe.
“ His right, for sums of necessary gold, 405
“ Shall first be pawn’d, and afterwards be sold,
“ Till time shall ever-wanting David draw
“ To pass your doubtful title into law ;
“ If not, the people have a right supreme
“ To make their kings, for kings are made for them.
“ All empire is no more than pow’r in trust, 411
“ Which, when resum’d, can be no longer just.
“ Succession, for the gen’ral good design’d,
“ In its own wrong a nation cannot bind :
“ If alt’ring that the people can relieve, 415
“ Better one suffer than a nation grieve.
“ The Jews well know their pow’r ; ere Saul they chose,
“ God was their king, and God they durst depose.
“ Urge now your piety, your filial name,
“ A father’s right, and fear of future fame ; 420
“ The public good, that universal call,
“ To which e’en heav’n submitted, answers all.
“ Nor let his love enchant your gen’rous mind ;
“ ’Tis nature’s tricks to propagate her kind.
“ Our fond begetters, who would never die, 425
“ Love but themselves in their posterity.
“ Or let his kindness by th’ effects be try’d,
“ Or let him lay his vain pretence aside.
“ God said he lov’d your father : could he bring
“ A better proof than to anoint him king ? 30
“ It surely shew’d he lov’d the shepherd well
“ Who gave so fair a flock as Israel.

- “ Would David have you thought his darling son ?
“ What means he then t’alienate the crown ?
“ The name of godly he may blush to bear, 435
“ Is’t after God’s own heart to cheat his heir ?
“ He to his brother gives supreme command,
“ To you a legacy of barren land,
“ Perhaps th’ old harp, on which he thrums his lays,
“ Or some dull Hebrew ballad in your praise. 440
“ Then the next heir, a prince severe and wise,
“ Already looks on you with jealous eyes ;
“ Sees through the thin disguises of your arts,
“ And marks your progress in the people’s hearts ;
“ Tho’ now his mighty soul its grief contains, 445
“ He meditates revenge who least complains ;
“ And, like a lion, slumb’ring in the way,
“ Or sleep dissembling, while he waits his prey,
“ His fearless foes within his distance draws,
“ Constrains his roaring, and contracts his paws, 450
“ Till at the last his time for fury found,
“ He shoots with sudden vengeance from the ground ;
“ The prostrate vulgar passes o’er and spares,
“ But with a lordly rage his hunters tears.
“ Your case no tame expedients will afford ; 455
“ Resolve on death, or conquest by the sword,
“ Which for no less a stake than life you draw,
“ And self-defence is nature’s eldest law.
“ Leave the warm people no considering time,
“ For then rebellion may be thought a crime. 460
“ Avail yourself of what occasion gives,
“ But try your title while your father lives ;
“ And, that your arms may have a fair pretence,
“ Proclaim you take them in the king’s defence,
“ Whose sacred life each minute would expose 465
“ To plots from seeming friends and secret foes.
“ And who can sound the depth of David’s soul ?
“ Perhaps his fear his kindness may control.
“ He fears his brother, though he loves his son,
“ For plighted vows too late to be undone. 470
“ If so, by force he wishes to be gain’d,
“ Like women’s leachery to seem constrain’d.

“Doubt not; but, when he most affects the frown,
“Commit a pleasing rape upon the crown.

“Secure his person to secure your cause; 475

“They who possess the prince possess the laws.”

He said; and this advice above the rest,
With Absalom's mild nature suited best;
Unblam'd of life, ambition set aside,
Not stain'd with cruelty, nor puff'd with pride. 480

How happy had he been if Destiny
Had higher plac'd his birth, or not so high?
His kingly virtues might have claim'd a throne,
And blest'd all other countries but his own.

But charming greatness since so few refuse, 485
'Tis juster to lament him than accuse.

Strong were his hopes a rival to remove,
With blandishments to gain the public love;
To head the faction while their zeal was hot,
And popularly prosecute the plot. 490

To further this Achithophel unites
The malecontents of all the Israelites:
Whose diff'ring parties he could wisely join
For several ends to serve the same design.

The best, and of the princes, some were such 495

Who thought the power of monarchy too much;
Mistaken men, and patriots in their hearts,
Not wicked, but seduc'd by impious arts.

By these the springs of property were bent,
And wound so high they crack'd the government.

The next for int'rest sought t' embroil the state, 501

To sell their duty at a dearer rate,
And make their Jewish markets of the throne,
Pretending public good to serve their own.

Others thought kings an useless heavy load, 505

Who cost too much, and did too little good:

These were for laying honest David by,

On principles of pure good husbandry.

With them join'd all the haranguers of the throng,

'That thought to get preferment by the tongue. 510

Who follow next a double danger bring,

Not only hating David but the king;

The Solymean rout, well vers'd, of old,
In goodly faction, and in treason bold;
Cow'ring and quaking at a conqueror's sword, 515
But lofty to a lawful prince restor'd;
Saw with disdain an Ethnic plot begun,
And scorn'd by Jebusites to be outdone.
Hot Levites headed these, who pull'd before
From th' ark, which in the judges' days they bore,
Resum'd their cant, and with a zealous cry 521
Pursu'd their old belov'd Theocracy;
Where sanhedrim and priest enslav'd the nation,
And justify'd their spoils by inspiration:
For who so fit to reign as Aaron's race, 525
If once dominion they could found in grace?
These led the pack; though not of surest scent,
Yet deepest mouth'd against the government,
A num'rous host of dreaming saints succeed,
Of the true old enthusiastic breed: 530
'Gainst form and order they their pow'r employ,
Nothing to build, and all things to destroy.
But far more num'rous was the herd of such
Who think too little, and who talk too much:
These out of mere instinct, they knew not why, 535
Ador'd their fathers' God and property;
And by the same blind benefit of Fate
The dev'l and the Jebusite did hate;
Born to be sav'd, e'en in their own despight,
Because they could not help believing right. 540
Such were the tools; but a whole hydra more
Remains of spouting heads, too long to score.
Some of their chiefs were princes of the land:
In the first rank of these did Zimri stand;
A man so various, that he seem'd to be 545
Not one but all mankind's epitome;
Stiff in opinions, always in the wrong,
Was ev'ry thing by starts, and nothing long;
But, in the course of one revolving moon,
Was chymist, fiddler, statesman, and buffoon: 550
Then all for women, painting, rhyming, drinking,
Besides ten thousand freaks that dy'd in thinking.

Blest madman! who could ev'ry hour employ
 With something new to wish or to enjoy!
 Railing and praising were his usual themes, 555
 And both (to show his judgment) in extremes;
 So over violent, or over civil,
 That ev'ry man, with him, was God or dev'l,
 In squand'ring wealth was his peculiar art;
 Nothing went unrewarded but desert. 560
 Beggar'd by fools, whom still he found too late;
 He had his jest, and they had his estate.
 He laugh'd himself from court; then sought relief
 By forming parties, but could ne'er be chief:
 For, spite of him, the weight of bus'ness fell 565
 On Absalom and wise Achithophel:
 Thus, wicked but in will, of means bereft,
 He left not faction, but of that was left.

Titles and names 'twere tedious to rehearse
 Of lords below the dignity of verse: 570
 Wits, warriors; common-wealth's men, were the best,
 Kind husbands, and mere nobles, all the rest.
 And therefore, in the name of Dulness, be
 The well-hung Balaam, and cold Caleb free;
 And canting Nadab let oblivion damn, 575
 Who made new porridge for the paschal lamb.
 Let Friendship's holy band some names assure,
 Some their own worth, and some let scorn secure.
 Nor shall the rascal rabble here have place,
 Whom kings no title gave, and God no grace: 580
 Not bull-fac'd Jonas, who could statutes draw
 To mean rebellion, and make treason law.
 But he, though bad, is follow'd by a worse,
 The wretch who heav'n's anointed dar'd to curse,
 Shimei, whose youth did early promise bring 585
 Of zeal to God, and hatred to his king,
 Did wisely from expensive sins refrain,
 And never broke the Sabbath but for gain;
 Nor ever was he known an oath to vent,
 Or curse, unless against the government. 590
 Thus heaping wealth, by the most ready way
 Among the Jews, which was to cheat and pray,

The city, to reward his pious hate
Against his master, chose him magistrate.
His hand a vase of justice did uphold ; 595
His neck was loaded with a chain of gold.
During his office treason was no crime ;
The sons of Belial had a glorious time :
For Shimei, though not prodigal of pelf,
Yet lov'd his wicked neighbour as himself. 600
When two or three were gather'd to declaim,
Against the monarch of Jerusalem,
Shimei was always in the midst of them ;
And if they curs'd the king when he was by,
Would rather curse than break good company. 605
If any durst his factious friends accuse,
He pack'd a jury of dissenting Jews,
Whose fellow-feeling in the godly cause
Would free the suff'ring saint from human laws :
For laws are only made to punish those 610
Who serve the king, and to protect his foes.
If any leisure time he had from pow'r,
(Because 'tis sin to misemploy an hour)
His bus'ness was, by writing, to persuade
That kings were useless, and a clog to trade : 615
And, that his noble style he might refine,
No Rechabite more shunn'd the fumes of wine.
Chaste were his cellars, and his shrival board
The grossness of a city-feast abhorr'd :
His cooks, with long disuse, their trade forgot ; 620
Cool was his kitchen, though his brains were hot.
Such frugal virtue malice may accuse,
But sure 'twas necessary to the Jews :
For towns, once burnt, such magistrates require,
As dare not tempt God's providence by fire. 625
With spiritual food he fed his servants well,
But free from flesh that made the Jews rebel ;
And Moses' laws he held in more account,
For forty days of fasting in the Mount.
To speak the rest, who better are forgot, 630
Would tire a well-breath'd witness of the plot :

Yet Corah, thou shalt from oblivion pass ;
Erect thyself, thou monumental brass,
High as the serpent of thy metal made,
While nations stand secure beneath thy shade. 635
What though his birth were base, yet comets rise
From earthly vapours ere they shine in skies.
Prodigious actions may as well be done
By weaver's issue, as by prince's son.
This arch attester for the public good 640
By that one deed ennobles all his blood.
Who ever ask'd the witnesses' high race,
Whose oath with martyrdom did Stephen grace ?
Ours was a Levite, and, as times went then,
His tribe were God Almighty's gentlemen : 645
Sunk were his eyes, his voice was harsh and loud,
Sure signs he neither chol'ric was, nor proud :
His long chin prov'd his wit ; his saint-like grace
A church vermilion, and a Moses' face :
His memory, miraculously great, 650
Could plots exceeding man's belief repeat,
Which therefore cannot be accounted lies,
For human wit could never such devise.
Some future truths are mingled in his book,
But where the witness fail'd the prophet spoke. 655
Some things like visionary flight appear ;
The spirit caught him up the Lord knows where,
And gave him his rabbinical degree,
Unknown to foreign university :
His judgment yet his mem'ry did excel, 660
Which piec'd his wondrous evidence so well,
And suited to the temper of the times,
Then groaning under Jebusitic crimes.
Let Isr'el's foes suspect his heav'nly call,
And rashly judge his writ apocryphal : 665
Our laws for such affronts have forfeits made ;
He takes his life who takes away his trade.
Were I myself in Witness Corah's place,
The wretch who did me such a dire disgrace
Should whet my memory, though once forgot, 670
To make him an appendix of my plot.

His zeal to heav'n made him his prince despise,
 And load his person with indignities :
 But zeal peculiar privilege affords,
 Indulging latitude to deeds and words ;
 And Corah might for Agag's murder call,
 In terms as coarse as Samuel us'd to Saul.
 What others in his evidence did join,
 (The best that could be had for love or coin)
 In Corah's own predicament will fall,
 For Witness is a common name to all.

675

980

Surrounded thus with friends of ev'ry sort,
 Deluded Absalom forsakes the court,
 Impatient of high hopes, urg'd with renown,
 And fir'd with near possession of a crown.
 Th' admiring crowd are dazzled with surprise,
 And on his goodly person feed their eyes,
 His joy conceal'd, he sets himself to show,
 On each side bowing popularly low :
 His looks, his gestures, and his words, he frames,
 And with familiar ease repeats their names.
 Thus form'd by Nature, furnish'd out with arts,
 He glides unfelt into their secret hearts ;
 Then with a kind compassionating look,
 And sighs bespeaking pity ere he spoke,
 Few words he said, but easy those and fit ;
 More slow than Hybla drops, and far more sweet.

685

691

695

I mourn, my countrymen, your lost estate,
 Though far unable to prevent your fate :
 Behold a banish'd man, for your dear cause
 Expos'd a prey to arbitrary laws !
 Yet oh ! that I alone could be undone,
 Cut off from empire, and no more a son !
 Now all your liberties a spoil are made,
 Egypt and Tyrus, intercept your trade,
 And Jebusites your sacred rites invade.
 My father, whom with rev'rence yet I name,
 Charm'd into ease, is careless of his fame,
 And, brib'd with petty sums of foreign gold,
 Is grown in Bathsheba's embraces old,

700

705

710

Exalts his enemies, his friends destroys,
And all his power against himself employs.
He gives, and let him give, my right away ;
But why should he his own and yours betray ?
He, only he, can make the nation bleed, 715
And he alone from my revenge is freed.
Take then my tears, (with that he wip'd his eyes)
'Tis all the aid my present pow'r supplies :
No court-informer can these arms accuse ;
These arms may sons against their fathers use ; 720
And 'tis my wish the next successor's reign
May make no other Israelite complain.
Youth, beauty, graceful action, seldom fail ;
But common int'rest always will prevail ;
And pity never ceases to be shown 725
To him who makes the people's wrongs his own.
The crowd, that still believe their kings oppress,
With lifted hands their young Messiah bless ;
Who now begins his progress to ordain
With chariots, horsemen, and a num'rous train : 730
From east to west his glories he displays,
And, like the sun, the promis'd land surveys.
Fame runs before him as the morning star,
And shouts of joy salute him from afar :
Each house receives him as a guardian god, 735
And consecrates the place of his abode.
But hospitable treats did most commend
Wise Issachar, his wealthy western friend.
This moving court, that caught the people's eyes,
And seem'd but pomp, did other ends disguise : 740
Achithophel had form'd it, with intent
To sound the depths, and fathom where it went,
The people's hearts, distinguish friends from foes,
And try their strength before they came to blows ;
Yet all was colour'd with a smooth pretence 745
Of specious love, and duty to their prince.
Religion, and redress of grievances,
Two names that always cheat and always please,
Are often urg'd ; and good King David's life
Endanger'd by a brother and a wife. 750

Thus, in a pageant shew a plot is made,
And peace itself is war in masquerade.
Oh! foolish Isr'el! never warn'd by ill!
Still the same bait, and circumvented still!
Did ever men forsake their present ease, 755
In midst of health imagine a disease;
Take pains contingent mischiefs to foresee,
Make heirs for monarchs, and for God decree?
What shall we think? can people give away,
Both for themselves and sons, their native sway? 760
Then they are left defenceless to the sword
Of each unbounded arbitrary lord;
And laws are vain, by which we right enjoy,
If kings unquestiō'd can those laws destroy.
Yet if the crowd be judge of fit and just, 765
And kings are only officers in trust,
Then this resuming cov'nant was declar'd
When kings were made, or is for ever barr'd.
If those who gave the sceptre could not tie
By their own deed their own posterity, 770
How then could Adam bind his future race?
How could his forfeit on mankind take place?
Or how could heav'nly justice damn us all,
Who ne'er consented to our father's fall?
Then kings are slaves to those whom they command,
And tenants to their people's pleasure stand; 776
Add, that the pow'r for property allow'd
Is mischievously seated in the crowd:
For who can be secure of private right,
If sov'reign sway may be dissolv'd by might? 780
Nor is the people's judgment always true;
The most may err as grossly as the few;
And faultless kings run down by common cry;
For vice, oppression, and for tyranny.
What standard is there in a fickle rout, 785
Which, flowing to the mark, runs faster out?
Not only crowds, but sanhedrims may be
Infected with this public lunacy,
And share the madness of rebellious times,
To murder monarchs for imagin'd crimes. 790

If they may give and take whene'er they please,
 Not kings alone, the Godhead's images,
 But government itself at length must fall
 To Nature's state, where all have right to all.
 Yet, grant our lords the people kings can make, 795
 What prudent men a settled throne would shake?
 For whatsoe'er their sufferings were before,
 That change they covet makes them suffer more.
 All other errors but disturb a state,
 But innovation is the blow of fate. 800

If ancient fabrics nod, and threat to fall,
 To patch their flaws, and buttress up the wall,
 Thus far 'tis duty: but here fix the mark;
 For all beyond it is to touch the ark.
 To change foundations, cast the frame anew, 805
 Is work for rebels, who base ends pursue;
 At once divine and human laws control,
 And mend the parts by ruin of the whole.
 The tamp'ring world is subject to this curse,
 To physic their disease into a worse. 810

Now, what relief can righteous David bring?
 How fatal 'tis to be too good a king!
 Friends he has few, so high the madness grows;
 Who dare be such must be the peoples foes.
 Yet some there were, e'en in the worst of days; 815
 Some let me name, and naming is to praise.

In this short file Barzillai first appears,
 Barzillai! crown'd with honour and with years.
 Long since the rising rebels he withstood
 In regions waste beyond the Jordan's flood; 820
 Unfortunately brave to buoy the state,
 But sinking underneath his master's fate.
 In exile with his godlike prince he mourn'd,
 For him he suffer'd, and with him return'd.
 The court he practis'd, not the courtiers' art; 825
 Large was his wealth, but larger was his heart,
 Which well the noblest objects knew to chuse,
 The fighting warrior and recording muse.
 His bed could once a fruitful issue boast;
 Now more than half a father's name is lost. 830

His eldest hope, with ev'ry grace adorn'd,
By me (so heaven will have it) always mourn'd,
And always honour'd, snatch'd in manhood's prime
By unequal Fates, and Providence's crime;
Yet not before the goal of honour won, 835
All parts fulfill'd of subject and of son;
Swift was the race, but short the time to run.
Oh, narrow circle, but of power divine,
Scanted in space, but perfect in thy line!
By sea, by land, thy matchless worth was known,
Arms thy delight, and war was all thine own: 841
Thy force infus'd, the fainting Tyrians propp'd,
And haughty Pharoah found his fortunes stopp'd.
Oh ancient honour! oh unconquer'd hand!
Whom foes unpunish'd never could withstand! 845
But Isr'el was unworthy of his name;
Short is the date of all immod'rate fame.
It looks as heaven our ruin had design'd,
And durst not trust thy fortune and thy mind. 849
Now, free from earth, thy disencumber'd soul [pole;
Mounts up, and leaves behind the clouds and starry
From thence thy kindred legions may'st thou bring
To aid the guardian angel of thy king.
Here stop, my Muse, here cease thy painful flight,
No pinions can pursue immortal height: 855
Tell good Barzillai thou canst sing no more,
And tell thy soul she should have fled before:
Or fled she with his life, and left this verse
To hang on her departed patron's hearse?
Now take thy steepy flight from heaven, and see 860
If thou canst find on earth another he:
Another he would be too hard to find;
See, then, whom thou canst see not far behind.
Zadoc the priest, whom, shunning power and place,
His lowly mind advanc'd to David's grace; 865
With him the Sagan of Jerusalem,
Of hospitable soul and noble stem;
Him of the western dome, whose weighty sense
Flows in fit words and heavenly eloquence.

The prophets' sons, by such example led, 870
To learning and to loyalty were bred :
For colleges on bounteous kings depend,
And never rebel was to arts a friend.
To these succeed the pillars of the laws,
Who best can plead, and best can judge a cause. 875
Next them a train of loyal peers ascend ;
Sharp-judging Adriel, the muses' friend,
Himself a muse ; in sanhedrim's debate
True to his prince, but not a slave of state ;
Whom David's love with honours did adorn, 880
That from his disobedient son were torn :
Jotham, of piercing wit and pregnant thought,
Endu'd by Nature, and by Learning taught,
To move assemblies, who but only try'd
The worse awhile, then chose the better side : 885
Nor chose alone, but turn'd the balance too ;
So much the weight of one brave man can do.
Hushai, the friend of David in distress,
In public storms of manly steadfastness ;
By foreign treaties he inform'd his youth, 890
And join'd experience to his native truth :
His frugal care supply'd the wanting throne,
Frugal for that, but bounteous of his own :
'Tis easy conduct when Exchequers flow,
But hard the task to manage well the low : 895
For sov'reign power is too depress'd or high,
When kings are forc'd to sell, or crowds to buy.
Indulge one labour more, my weary muse,
For Amiel ; who can Amiel's praise refuse ?
Of ancient race by birth, but nobler yet 900
In his own worth, and without title great.
The sanhedrim long time as chief he rul'd,
Their reason guided, and their passion cool'd :
So dextrous was he in the crown's defence,
So form'd to speak a loyal nation's sense, 905
That, as their band was Israel's tribes in small,
So fit was he to represent them all.
Now rather charioteers the seat ascend,
Whose loose careers his steady skill commend ;

They, like th' unequal ruler of the day,
Misguide the seasons, and mistake the way;
While he, withdrawn, at their mad labour smiles,
And safe enjoys the Sabbath of his toils.

These were the chief; a small but faithful band
Of worthies, in the breach who dar'd to stand, 915
And tempt th' united fury of the land.

With grief they view'd such pow'rful engines bent
To batter down the lawful government.

A num'rous faction, with pretended frights,
In sanhedrims to plume the regal rights; 920

The true successor from the court remov'd,
The plot by hireling witnesses improv'd.

These ills they saw, and, as their duty bound,
They shew'd the king the danger of the wound;
That no concessions from the throne would please,
But lenitives fomented the disease: 926

That Absalom, ambitious of the crown,
Was made the lure to draw the people down:
That false Achithophel's pernicious hate
Had turn'd the plot to ruin church and state: 930
The council violent, the rabble worse;
That Shimei taught Jerusalem to curse.

With all these loads of injury oppress'd,
And long revolving in his careful breast
Th' event of things; at last, his patience tir'd, 935
Thus from his royal throne, by heaven inspir'd,
The godlike David spoke; with awful fear
His train their Maker in their master hear.

“ Thus long have I, by native mercy sway'd,
“ My wrongs dissembl'd, my revenge delay'd: 940
“ So willing to forgive th' offending age,
“ So much the father did the king assuage.
“ But now, so far my clemency they flight,
“ Th' offenders question my forgiving right.
“ That one was made for many they contend; 945
“ But 'tis to rule, for that's a monarch's end.
“ They call my tenderness of blood my fear;
“ Tho' manly tempers can the longest bear.

- " Yet, since they will divert my native course,
 " 'Tis time to shew I am not good by force. 950
 " Those heap'd affronts that haughty subjects bring,
 " Are burdens for a camel, not a king.
 " Kings are the public pillars of the state,
 " Born to sustain and prop the nation's weight.
 " If my young Sampson will pretend a call 955
 " To shake the column, let him share the fall.
 " But, oh! that yet he would repent and live!
 " How easy 'tis for parents to forgive!
 " With how few tears a pardon might be won
 " From Nature, pleading for a darling son! 960
 " Poor, pity'd youth, by my paternal care
 " Rais'd up to all the height his frame could bear!
 " Had God ordain'd his fate for empire born,
 " He would have giv'n his soul another turn:
 " Gull'd with a patriot's name, whose modern sense
 " Is one that would by law supplant his prince; 966
 " The people's brave, the politician's tool;
 " Never was patriot yet but was a fool.
 " Whence comes it that religion and the laws
 " Should more be Absalom's than David's cause? 970
 " His old instructor, ere he lost his place,
 " Was never thought endu'd with so much grace.
 " Good heavens, how faction can a patriot paint!
 " My rebel ever proves my people's saint.
 " Would they impose an heir upon the throne, 975
 " Let sanhedrims be taught to give their own.
 " A king's at least a part of government,
 " And mine as requisite as their consent;
 " Without my leave a future king to chuse
 " Infers a right the present to depose. 980
 " True, they petition me t' approve their choice;
 " But Esau's hands suit ill with Jacob's voice.
 " My pious subjects for my safety pray,
 " Which to secure they take my pow'r away.
 " From plots and treasons heaven preserve my years;
 " But save me most from my petitioners. 986
 " Unsatiated as the barren womb or grave,
 " God cannot grant so much as they can crave,

- “ What then is left, but with a jealous eye
“ To guard the small remains of royalty? 990
“ The law shall still direct my peaceful sway,
“ And the same law teach rebels to obey;
“ Votes shall no more establish’d power control,
“ Such votes as make a part exceed the whole. 994
“ No groundless clamours shall my friends remove,
“ Nor crowds have power to punish ere they prove;
“ For gods and godlike kings their care express,
“ Still to defend their servants in distress.
“ Oh, that my power to saving were confin’d!
“ Why am I forc’d, like heaven, against my mind,
“ To make examples of another kind? 1001
“ Must I, at length, the sword of justice draw?
“ Oh curs’d effects of necessary law!
“ How ill my fear they by my mercy scan:
“ Beware the fury of a patient man. 1005
“ Law they require; let Law then shew her face;
“ They could not be content to look on Grace,
“ Her hinder parts, but, with a daring eye,
“ To tempt the terror of her front, and die.
“ By their own arts, ’tis righteously decreed, 1010
“ Those dire artificers of death shall bleed.
“ Against themselves their witnesses will swear,
“ Till, viper like, their mother-plot they tear,
“ And suck for nutriment that bloody gore
“ Which was their principle of life before; 1015
“ Their Belial with their Beelzebub will fight;
“ Thus on my foes my foes shall do me right,
“ Nor doubt th’ event; for factious crowds engage
“ In their first onset all their brutal rage.
“ Then let ’em take an unresisted course; 1020
“ Retire, and traverse, and delude their force:
“ But when they stand all breathless, urge the fight,
“ And rise upon them with redoubled might:
“ For lawful power is still superior found; [ground.”
“ When, long driv’n back, at length it stands the
He said: th’ Almighty nodding gave consent, 1026
And peals of thunder shook the firmament.

Henceforth a series of new time began,
The mighty years in long procession ran;
Once more the god-like David was restor'd,
And willing nations knew their lawful lord.

1031



PART II*.

-----Si quis tamen hæc quoque, si quis captus amore leget.

SINCE men, like beasts, each other's prey were made,
 Since trade began, and priesthood grew a trade,
 Since realms were form'd, none sure so curs'd as those
 That madly their own happiness oppose ;
 There heaven itself, and godlike kings, in vain 5
 Show'r down the manna of a gentle reign ;
 While pamper'd crowds to mad sedition run,
 And monarchs by indulgence are undone :
 Thus David's clemency was fatal grown,
 While wealthy Faction aw'd the wanton throne. 10
 For now their sov'reign's orders to contemn
 Was held the charter of Jerusalem ;
 His rights t'invade, his tributes to refuse,
 A privilege peculiar to the Jews ;
 As if from heavenly call this licence fell, 15
 And Jacob's seed were chosen to rebel !

Achithophel with triumph sees his crimes
 Thus suited to the madness of the times ;
 And Absalom, to make his hopes succeed,
 Of flatt'ring charms no longer stands in need : 20
 While fond of change, though ne'er so dearly bought,
 Our tribes outstrip the youth's ambitious thought ;
 His swiftest hopes with swifter homage meet,
 And crowd their servile necks beneath his feet.
 Thus to his aid, whilst pressing tides repair, 25
 He mounts, and spreads his streamers in the air.
 The charms of empire might his youth mislead,
 But what can our besotted Israel plead ?

* In the year 1680, Mr. Dryden undertook the poem of Absalom and Achithophel upon the desire of King Charles II. The performance was applauded by every one, and several persons pressing him to write a second part, he, upon declining it himself, spoke to Mr. Tate to write one, and gave him his advice in the direction of it, and that part beginning p. 157, l. 3.

“ Next these a troop of busy spirits press,”
 and ending p. 162. l. 4.

“ To talk like Doeg, and to write like thee.”
 containing near two hundred verses, were entirely Mr. Dryden's composition, besides some touches in other places. The preceding lines, upwards of three hundred in number, were written by Mr. Tate. The poem is here printed entire.

Sway'd by a monarch whose serene command
Seems half the blessing of our promis'd land: 30
Whose only grievance is excess of ease,
Freedom our pain, and plenty our disease!
Yet as all folly would lay claim to sense,
And wickedness ne'er wanted a pretence,
With arguments they'd make their treason good, 35
And righteous David's self with slanders load.
That arts of foreign sway he did affect,
And guilty Jebusites from law protect,
Whose very chiefs, convict, were never freed,
Nay, we have seen their sacrificers bleed! 40
Accusers' infamy is urg'd in vain,
While in the bounds of sense they did contain,
But soon they launch'd into th' unfathom'd tide,
And in the depths they knew disdain'd to ride:
For probable discov'ries to dispense 45
Was thought below a pension'd evidence:
Mere truth was dull, nor suited with the port
Of pamper'd Corah when advanc'd to court.
No less than wonders now they will impose,
And projects void of grace or sense disclose. 50
Such was the charge on pious Michael brought,
Michael, that ne'er was cruel e'en in thought,
The best of queens, and most obedient wife,
Impeach'd of curs'd designs on David's life!
His life, the theme of her eternal prayer, 55
'Tis scarce so much his guardian angel's care.
Not summer morns such mildness can disclose,
The Hermon lily, nor the Sharon rose.
Neglecting each vain pomp of majesty,
Transported Michal feeds her thoughts on high; 60
She lives with angels, and, as angels do,
Quits heaven sometimes to bless the world below:
Where, cherish'd by her bounty's plenteous spring,
Reviving widows smile, and orphans sing.
Oh! when rebellious Israel's crimes at height, 65
Are threaten'd with her Lord's approaching fate,
The pieties of Michal then remain
In heaven's remembrance, and prolong his reign.

Less desolation did the pest pursue
That from Dan's limits to Beersheba flew; 70
Less fatal the repeated wars of Tyre,
And less Jerusalem's avenging fire:
With gentler terror these our state o'er-ran,
Than since our evidencing days began!
On ev'ry cheek a pale confusion fate, 75
Continu'd fear beyond the worst of fate!
Trust was no more, art, science, useless made,
All occupations lost but Corah's trade.
Mean-while a guard on modest Corah wait,
If not for safety, needful yet for state. 80
Well might he deem each peer and prince his slave,
And lord it o'er the tribes which he could save:
E'en vice, in him, was virtue—what sad fate,
But for his honesty, had seiz'd our state?
And with what tyranny had we been curst, 85
Had Corah never prov'd a villain first?
T'have told his knowledge of th' intrigue in gross
Had been, alas! to our deponent's loss:
The travell'd Levite had th' experience got
To husband well, and make the best of's plot; 90
And therefore, like an evidence of skill,
With wise reserves secur'd his pension still;
Nor quite of future power himself bereft,
But limboes large for unbelievers left.
And now his writ such reverence had got, 95
'Twas worse than plotting to suspect his plot.
Some were so well convinc'd, they made no doubt
Themselves to help the founder'd swearers out:
Some had their sense impos'd on by their fear,
But more for int'rest's sake believe and swear: 100
E'en to that height with some the frenzy grew,
They rag'd to find their danger not prove true.

Yet than all these a viler crew remain,
Who with Achithophel the cry maintain;
Not urg'd by fear, not through misguided sense; 105
Blind zeal and starving need had some pretence:
But for the good old cause, that did excite
Th' orig'nal rebels' wiles, revenge and spite.

These raise the plot, to have the scandal thrown
 Upon the bright successor of the crown, 110
 Whose virtue with such wrongs they had pursu'd:
 As seem'd all hope of pardon to exclude.

Thus, while on private ends their zeal is built,
 The cheated crowd applaud and share their guilt.

Such practices as these, too gross to lie 115
 Long unobserv'd by each discerning eye,

The more judicious Isr'elites unspell'd,
 Though still the charm the giddy rabble held:
 E'en Abialom, amidst the dazzling beams
 Of empire, and ambition's flatt'ring dreams, 120

Perceives the plot, too foul to be excus'd,
 To aid designs no less pernicious us'd;
 And, filial sense yet striving in his breast,
 Thus to Achithophel his doubts express. 124

"Why are my thoughts upon a crown employ'd,
 "Which, once obtain'd, can be but half enjoy'd?"

"Not so when virtue did my arms require,
 "And to my father's wars I flew entire.

"My regal pow'r how will my foes resent,
 "When I myself have scarce my own consent?" 130

"Give me a son's unblemish'd truth again,
 "Or quench the sparks of duty that remain.

"How slight to force a throne that legions guard!
 "The task to me to prove unjust how hard!

"And if th' imagin'd guilt thus wound my thought,
 "What will it when the tragic scene is wrought?" 136

"Dire war must first be conjur'd from below,
 "The realm we'd rule we first must overthrow;

"And when the civil furies are on wing,
 "That blind and undistinguish'd slaughters fling, 140

"Who knows what impious chance may reach the
 "Oh! rather let me perish in the strife, [king?

"Than have my crown, the price of David's life!
 "Or if the tempest of the war he stand,

"In peace some vile officious villian's hand 145
 "His soul's anointed temple may invade,

"Or, press'd by clam'rous crowds, myself be made

“ His murderer; rebellious crowds, whose guilt
 “ Shall dread his vengeance till his blood be spilt;
 “ Which, if my filial tendernefs oppose, 150
 “ Since to the empire by their arms I rofe,
 “ Thofe very arms on me fhall be employ’d,
 “ A new ufurper crown’d, and I deftroy’d:
 “ The fame pretence of public good will hold,
 “ And new Achithophels be found as bold 155
 “ To urge the needful change, perhaps the old.
 He faid. The ftatesman with a fmile replies,
 A fmile that did his rifing fpleen difguife;
 “ My thoughts prefum’d our labours at an end,
 “ And are we ftill with confcience to contend? 160
 “ Whofe want in kings as needful is allow’d
 “ As ’tis for them to find it in the crowd.
 “ Far in the doubtful paffage you are gone,
 “ And only can be fafe by preffing on.
 “ The crown’s true heir, a prince fevere and wife, 165
 “ Has view’d your motions long with jealous eyes,
 “ Your perfon’s charms, your more prevailing arts,
 “ And mark’d your progrefs in the people’s hearts,
 “ Whofe patience is th’ effect of ftinted power,
 “ But treasures vengeance for the fatal hour; 170
 “ And if remote the peril he can bring,
 “ Your prefent danger’s greater from the king.
 “ Let not a parent’s name deceive your fenfe,
 “ Nor truft the father in a jealous prince!
 “ Your trivial faults if he could fo refent, 175
 “ To doom you little lefs than banifhment
 “ What rage muft your prefumption fince infpire!
 “ Againft his orders you return from Tyre.
 “ Not only fo, but with a pomp more high,
 “ And open court of popularity, 180
 “ The factious tribes”—“ And this reproof from thee?”
 The prince replies, “ O ftatesman’s winding fkill,
 “ They firft condemn that firft advis’d the ill!”
 “ Illuftrious youth!” return’d Achithophel,
 “ Mifconfttrue not the words that mean you well. 185
 “ The courfe you fteer I worthy blame conclude,
 “ But ’tis becaufe you leave it unpursu’d.

- “ A monarch’s crown with fate surrounded lies,
“ Who reach, lay hold on death that miss the prize.
“ Did you for this expose yourself to show, 190
“ And to the crowd bow popularly low ?
“ For this your glorious progress next ordain,
“ With chariots, horsemen, and a num’rous train,
“ With fame before you, like the morning star,
“ And shouts of joy saluting from afar ? 195
“ Oh, from the heights you’ve reach’d, but take a view,
“ Scarce leading Lucifer could fall like you !
“ And must I here my shipwreck’d arts bemoan ?
“ Have I for this so oft made Israel groan ?
“ Your single int’rest with the nation weigh’d, 200
“ And turn’d the scale where your desires were laid !
“ E’en when at helm a course so dang’rous mov’d,
“ To land your hopes as my removal prov’d.”—
“ I not dispute,” the royal youth replies,
“ The known perfection of your policies ; 205
“ Nor in Achithophel yet grudge or blame
“ The privilege that statesmen ever claim,
“ Who private int’rest never yet pursu’d,
“ But still pretended ’twas for other’s good :
“ What politician yet e’er scap’d his fate, 210
“ Who saving his own neck not sav’d the state ?
“ From hence on ev’ry humourous wind that veer’d,
“ With shifted sails a sev’ral course you steer’d,
“ What from a sway did David e’er pursue,
“ That seem’d like absolute, but sprung from you ?
“ Who at your instance quash’d each penal law, 216
“ That kept dissenting factious Jews in awe ;
“ And who suspends fix’d laws, may abrogate,
“ That done, form new, and so enslave the state.
“ E’en property, whose champion now you stand, 220
“ And seem for this the idol of the land,
“ Did ne’er sustain such violence before
“ As when your counsel shut the royal store ;
“ Advice, that ruin to whole tribes procur’d,
“ But secret kept till your own bank’s secur’d. 225
“ Recount with this the triple cov’nant broke,
“ And Isr’el fitted for a foreign yoke ;

“ Nor here your counsels fatal progress staid,
“ But sent our levy’d pow’rs to Pharaoh’s aid. 229
“ Hence Tyre and Is’rel low in ruins laid, [made.
“ And Egypt, once their scorn, their common terror
“ E’en yet of such a season can we dream,
“ When royal rights you make your darling theme?
“ For pow’r unlimited could reasons draw,
“ And place prerogative above the law; 235
“ Which on your fall from office grew unjust,
“ The laws made king, the king a slave in trust!
“ Whom with state-craft, to int’rest only true,
“ You now accuse of ills contriv’d by you.”
“ To this Hell’s agent—“ Royal youth! fix here, 240
“ Let int’rest be the star by which you steer.
“ Hence to repose your trust in me was wise,
“ Whose int’rest most in your advancement lies;
“ A tie so firm as always will avail,
“ When friendship, nature, and religion, fail, 245
“ On ours the safety of the crowd depends;
“ Secure the crowd, and we obtain our ends,
“ Whom I will cause so far our guilt to share,
“ Till they are made our champions by their fear.
“ What opposition can your rival bring, 250
“ While sanhedrims are jealous of the king?
“ His strength as yet in David’s friendship lies,
“ And what can David’s self without supplies?
“ Who with exclusive bills must now dispense,
“ Debar the heir, or starve in his defence: 255
“ Conditions which our elders ne’er will quit,
“ And David’s justice never can admit;
“ Or forc’d by wants his brother to betray,
“ To your ambition next he clears the way;
“ For if succession once to nought they bring, 260
“ Their next advance removes the present king;
“ Persisting else his senates to dissolve,
“ In equal hazard shall his reign involve.
“ Our tribes, whom Pharaoh’s pow’r so much alarms,
“ Shall rise without their prince to oppose his arms; 265
“ Nor boots it on what cause at first they join,
“ Their troops once up are tools for our design:

“ At least such subtle cov’nants shall be made,
“ Till peace itself is war in masquerade :
“ Associations of mysterious sense, 270
“ Against, but seeming for, the king’s defence :
“ E’en on their courts of justice fetters draw,
“ And from our agents muzzle up their law ;
“ By which a conquest if we fail to make,
“ ’Tis a drawn game at worst, and we secure our stake.”

He said, and for the dire success depends 276
On various sects, by common guilt made friends ;
Whose heads, tho’ ne’er so diff’ring in their creed,
I’ th’ point of treason yet were well agreed.

’Mongst these extorting Ishban first appears, 280
Pursu’d by a meagre troop of bankrupt heirs.
Bless’d times ! when Ishban, he whose occupation
So long has been to cheat, reforms the nation !
Ishban of conscience suited to his trade,
As good a saint as us’rer ever made : 285

Yet Mammon has not so engross’d him quite,
But Belial lays as large a claim of spite ,
Who, for those pardons from his prince he draws,
Returns reproaches, and cries up the cause.
That year in which the city he did sway, 290
He left rebellion in a hopeful way ;

Yet his ambition once was found so bold
To offer talents of extorted gold :
Could David’s wants have so been brib’d, to shame
And scandalize our peerage with his name, 295
For which his dear sedition he’d forswear,
And e’en turn loyal to be made a peer.

Next him let railing Rabsheka have place,
So full of zeal he has no need of grace ;
A saint that can both flesh and spirit use, 300
Alike haunt conventicles and the stews ;
Of whom the question difficult appears,
If most i’ th’ preachers’ or the bawds’ arrears.

What caution could appear too much in him
That keeps the treasure of Jerusalem ? 305
Let David’s brother but approach the town,
Double our guards, he cries, we are undone ;

Protesting that he dares not sleep in's bed,
Lest he should rise next morn without his head.

Next these a troop of busy spirits press,
Of little fortunes, and of conscience less; 310

With them the tribe, whose luxury had drain'd
Their banks, in former sequestrations gain'd;
Who rich and great by past rebellions grew,
And long'd to fish the troubled streams anew. 315

Some future hopes, some present payment draws
To sell their conscience and espouse the cause;
Such stipends those vile hirelings best besit,
Priests without grace, and poets without wit.

Shall that false Hebronite escape our curse, 320
Judas, that keeps the rebels' pension purse;
Judas, that pays the treason-writers' fee,

Judas, that well deserves his namesake's tree,
Who at Jerusalem's own gates erects

His college for a nursery of sects; 235

Young prophets with an early care secures,
And with the dung of his own arts manures.

What have the men of Hebron here to do?

What part in Isr'el's promis'd land have you?

Here Phaleg, the Lay-Hebronite, is come, 330

'Cause, like the rest, he could not live at home.

Who from his own possessions could not drain
An omer e'en of Hebronitish grain:

Here struts it like a patriot, and talks high

Of injur'd subject's alter'd property; 335

An emblem of that buzzing insect just,

That mounts the wheel, and thinks she raises dust.

Can dry bones live? or skeletons produce

The vital warmth of cuckoldizing juice?

Slim Phaleg could, and, at the table fed, 340

Return'd the grateful product to the bed.

A waiting man to trav'ling nobles chose,

He his own laws would saucily impose,

Till bastinado'd, back again he went

To learn those manners he to teach was sent. 545

Chastis'd, he ought to have retreated home,

But he reads politics to Absalom:

For never Hebronite, tho' kick'd and scorn'd,
To his own country willingly return'd.
But leaving famish'd Phaleg to be fed, 350
And to talk treason for his daily bread,
Let Hebron, nay, let Hell, produce a man
So made for mischief as Ben Jochanan.
A Jew of humble parentage was he,
By trade a Levite, tho' of low degree; 355
His pride no higher than the desk aspir'd,
But for the drudgery of priests was hir'd
To read and pray, in linen ephod brave,
And pick up single shekels from the grave.
Marry'd at last, but finding charge come faster, 360
He could not live by God, but chang'd his master;
Inspir'd by want, was made a factious tool;
They got a villain, and we lost a fool.
Still violent, whatever cause he took,
But most against the party he forsook: 365
For renegadoes, who ne'er turn by halves,
Are bound in conscience to be double knaves;
So this prose prophet took most monstrous pains
To let his masters see he earn'd his gains:
But as the dev'l owes all his imps a shame, 370
He chose th' apostate for his proper theme;
With little pains he made the picture true,
And from reflection took the rogue he drew.
A wond'rous work, to prove the Jewish nation
In ev'ry age a murm'ring generation; 375
To trace 'em from their infancy of sinning,
And shew 'em factious from the first beginning;
To prove they could rebel, and rail, and mock,
Much to the credit of the chosen flock;
A strong authority, which must convince 380
That saints own no allegiance to their prince;
As 'tis a leading card to make a whore,
To prove her mother had turn'd up before.
But, tell me, did the drunken patriarch bless
The son that shew'd his father's nakedness? 385
Such thanks the present church thy pen will give
Which proves rebellion was so primitive.

Must ancient failings be examples made?
Then murderers from Cain may learn their trade.
As thou the heathen and the saint hast drawn, 390
Methinks th' apostate was the better man;
And thy hot father, waving my respect,
Not of a mother-church, but of a sect:
And such he needs must be of thy enditing,
This comes of drinking asses' milk and writing. 395
If Balak should be call'd to leave his place,
As profit is the loudest call of grace.
His temple, dispossest'd of one, would be
Replenish'd with sev'n devils more by thee.
Levi, thou art a load, I'll lay thee down, 400
And shew rebellion bare, without a gown;
Poor slaves in metre, dull and addle-pated,
Who rhyme below e'en David's psalms translated.
Some in my speedy pace I must outrun,
As lame Mephibosheth the wizard's son. 405
To make quick way I leap o'er heavy blocks,
Shun rotten Uzza as I would the pox;
And hasten Og and Doeg to rehearse,
Two fools that crutch their feeble sense on verse,
Who, by my Muse, to all succeeding times 410
Shall live, in spite of their own dogg'rel rhymes.
Doeg, tho' without knowing how or why,
Made still a blund'ring kind of melody,
Spurr'd boldly on, and dash'd thro' thick and thin,
Thro' sense and nonsense, never out nor in; 415
Free from all meaning, whether good or bad,
And in one word heroically mad:
He was too warm on picking work to dwell,
But faggoted his notions as they fell,
And if they rhym'd and rattled all was well: 420
Spiteful he is not, tho' he wrote a satire,
For still there goes some thinking to ill-nature;
He needs no more than birds and beasts to think,
All his occasions are to eat and drink:
If he call rogue and rascal from a garret, 425
He means you no more mischief than a parrot:

The words for friend and foe alike were made,
 To fetter them in verse is all his trade.
 For almonds he'll cry whore to his own mother,
 And call young Absalom king David's brother. 430
 Let him be gallows-free by my consent,
 And nothing suffer since he nothing meant :
 Hanging supposes human soul and reason,
 This animal's below committing treason :
 Shall he be hang'd who never could rebel ? 435
 That's a preferment for Achithophel.
 The woman that committed buggary
 Was rightly sentenc'd by the law to die ;
 But 'twas hard fate that to the gallows led
 The dog that never heard the statute read. 440
 Railing in other men may be a crime,
 But ought to pass for mere instinct in him :
 Instinct he follows, and no farther knows,
 For to write verse with him is to transpose,
 'Twere pity treason at his door to lay, 445
 Who makes heav'n's gate a lock to its own key.
 Let him rail on ; let his invective muse
 Have four-and-twenty letters to abuse,
 Which if he jumbles to one line of sense,
 Indict him of a capital offence. 450
 In fireworks give him leave to vent his spite,
 Those are the only serpents he can write :
 The height of his ambition is, we know,
 But to be master of a puppetshow ;
 On that one stage his works may yet appear, 455
 And a month's harvest keeps him all the year.
 Now stop your noses, readers, all and some,
 For here's a tun of midnight-work to come,
 Og from a treason-tavern rolling home.
 Round as a globe, and liquor'd ev'ry chink, 460
 Goodly and great, he sails behind his link ;
 With all this bulk there's nothing lost in Og,
 For ev'ry inch that is not fool is rogue :
 A monstrous mass of foul corrupted matter,
 As all the devils had spew'd to make the batter. 465

When wine has giv'n him courage to blaspheme,
He curses God ; but God before curs'd him :
And if man could have reason, none has more,
That made his paunch so rich and him so poor.
With wealth he was not trusted, for heav'n knew 470
What 'twas of old to pamper up a Jew :
To what would he on quail and pheasant swell,
'That e'en on tripe and carrion could rebel ?
But tho' heav'n made him poor, with rev'ence speaking,
He never was a poet of God's making : 475
The midwife laid her hand on his thick skull,
With this prophetic blessing—Be thou dull ;
Drink, swear, and roar, forbear no lewd delight
Fit for thy bulk ; do any thing but write :
Thou art of lasting make, like thoughtless men : 480
A strong nativity—but for the pen !
Eat opium, mingle ars'nick in thy drink,
Still thou may'st live, avoiding pen and ink.
I see, I see 'tis counsel giv'n in vain,
For treason botch'd in rhyme will be thy bane : 485
Rhyme is the rock on which thou art to wreck ;
'Tis fatal to thy fame and to thy neck.
Why should thy metre good king David blast ?
A psalm of his will surely be thy last,
Dar'st thou presume in verse to meet thy foes, 490
'Thou, whom the penny pamphlet foil'd in prose ?
Doeg, whom God for mankind's mirth has made,
O'ertops thy talent in thy very trade :
Doeg to thee, thy paintings are so coarse,
A poet is, tho' he's the poet's horse. 495
A double noose thou on thy neck dost pull,
For writing treason, and for writing dull :
To die for faction is a common evil,
But to be hang'd for nonsense is the dev'l.
Hadst thou the glories of thy king express'd, 500
Thy praises had beed satire at the best ;
But thou in clumsy verse, unlik'd, unpointed,
Hast shamefully defy'd the Lord's anointed.
I will not rake the dunghill of thy crimes,
For who would read thy life that reads thy rhymes

But of king David's foes be this the doom, 506
 May all be like the young man Absalom;
 And for my foes, may this their blessing be,
 To talk like Doeg, and to write like thee.

Achithophel each rank, degree, and age, 510
 For various ends neglects not to engage;
 The wise and rich for purse and counsel brought,
 The fools and beggars for their number fought;
 Who yet not only on the town depends,
 For e'en in court the faction had its friends; 515
 These thought the places they possess'd too small,
 And in their hearts wish'd court and king to fall;
 Whose names the muse disdaining, holds i' th' dark,
 Thrust in the villian herd without a mark;
 With parasites and libel-spawning imps, 520
 Intriguing fops, dull jesters, and worse pimps.
 Disdain the rascal rabble to pursue,
 Their set cabals are yet a viler crew:
 See where involv'd in common smoke they sit,
 Some for our mirth, some for our satire fit; 525
 These gloomy, thoughtful, and on mischief bent,
 While those for mere good fellowship frequent
 Th' appointed club, can let sedition pass,
 Sense, nonsense, any thing, t'employ the glass;
 And who believe in their dull honest hearts, 530
 The rest talk treason but to shew their parts;
 Who ne'er had wit or will for mischief yet,
 But pleas'd to be reputed of a set.

But in the sacred annals of our plot,
 Industrious Arod never be forgot; 535
 The labours of this midnight magistrate
 May vie with Corah's to preserve the state:
 In search of arms he fail'd not to lay hold
 On war's most pow'rful, dang'rous weapon, gold:
 At last to take from Jebusites all odds, 540
 Their altars pillag'd, stole their very gods.
 Oft' would he cry, when treasure he surpris'd,
 'Tis Baalish gold in David's coin disguis'd;
 Which to his house with richer reliques came,
 While lumbar idols only fed the flame: 545

For our wise rabble ne'er took pains t'enquire
 What 'twas he burnt, so't made a rousing fire;
 With which our elder was enrich'd no more
 Than false Gehazi with the Syrian's store;
 So poor, that when our chusing tribes were met, 550
 E'en for his stinking votes he ran in debt;
 For meat the wicked, and, as authors think,
 The saints he chous'd for his electing drink:
 Thus ev'ry shift and subtle method past,
 And all to be no Zaken at the last. 555

Now rais'd on Tyre's sad ruins, Pharaoh's pride
 Soar'd high, his legions threat'ning far and wide;
 As when a batt'ring storm engender'd high,
 By winds upheld, hangs hov'ring in the sky,
 Is gaz'd upon by every trembling swain, 560
 This for his vineyard fears, and that his grain:
 For blooming plants and flow'rs new-op'ning these:
 For lambs yean'd lately, and far-lab'ring bees,
 To guard his stock each to the gods does call,
 Uncertain where the fire-charg'd clouds will fall: 565
 E'en so the doubtful nations watch his arms,
 With terror each expecting his alarms.

Where, Judah, where was now thy lion's roar?
 Thou only couldst the captive lands restore;
 But thou, with inbred broils and faction prest, 570
 From Egypt need'st a guardian with the rest.
 Thy prince from sanhedrims no trust allow'd.
 Too much the representers of the crowd,
 Who for their own defence give no supply,
 But what the crown's prerogatives must buy; 575
 As if their monarch's rights to violate
 More needful were than to preserve the state!
 From present dangers they divert their care,
 And all their fears are of the royal heir;
 Whom now the reigning malice of his foes 580
 Unjudg'd would sentence, and ere crown'd depose:
 Religion the pretence, but their decree
 To bar his reign, whate'er his faith shall be!
 By sanhedrims and clam'rous crowds thus prest,
 What passions rent the righteous David's breast? 585

Who knows not how t'oppose or to comply,
 Unjust to grant, and dang'rous to deny !
 How near in this dark juncture Isr'el's fate,
 Whose peace one sole expedient could create,
 Which yet th' extremest virtue did require, 590
 E'en of that prince whose downfal they conspire !
 His absence David does with tears advise
 T' appease their rage : undaunted he complies.
 Thus he who, prodigal of blood and ease,
 A royal life expos'd to winds and seas, 595
 At once contending with the waves and fire,
 And heading danger in the wars of Tyre,
 Inglorious now forsakes his native sand,
 And like an exile quits the promis'd land !
 Our monarch scarce from pressing tears refrains, 600
 And painfully his royal state maintains,
 Who now embracing on th' extremest shore
 Almost revokes what he enjoin'd before ;
 Concludes at last more trust to be allow'd
 To storms and seas than to the raging crowd ! 605
 Forbear, rash muse ! the parting scene to draw,
 With silence charm'd as deep as theirs that saw ;
 Not only our attending nobles weep,
 But hardy sailors swell with tears the deep !
 The tide restrain'd her course, and more amaz'd, 610
 The twin-stars on the royal brothers gaz'd ?
 While this sole fear——
 Does trouble to our suff'ring hero bring,
 Lest next the pop'lar rage oppress the king.
 Thus parting, each for th' other's danger griev'd, 615
 The shore the king, the seas the prince receiv'd.
 Go, injur'd hero ! while propitious gales,
 Soft as thy comfort's breath, inspire thy sails :
 Well may she trust her beauties on a flood
 Where thy triumphant fleets so oft' have rode ! 620
 Safe on her breast reclin'd, her rest be deep,
 Rock'd like a Nereid by the waves asleep ;
 Whilst happiest dreams her fancy entertain,
 And to Elysian fields convert the main !

Go, injur'd hero! while the shores of Tyre
At thy approach so silent shall admire,
Who on thy thunder still their thoughts employ,
And greet thy landing with a trembling joy.

625

On heroes thus the prophet's fate is thrown,
Admir'd by ev'ry nation but their own;

630

Yet while our factious Jews his worth deny,
Their aching conscience gives their tongue the lie.

E'en in the worst of men the noblest parts

Confess him, and he triumphs in their hearts,

Whom to his king the best respects commend

635

Of subject, soldier, kinsman, prince, and friend:

All sacred names of most divine esteem,

And to perfection all sustain'd by him:

Wise, just, and constant, courtly without art,

Swift to discern, and to reward desert;

640

No hour of his in fruitless ease destroy'd,

But on the noblest subjects still employ'd;

Whose steady soul ne'er learnt to separate

Between his monarch's int'rest and the state,

But heaps those blessings on the royal head,

645

Which he well knows must be on subjects shed.

On what pretence could then the vulgar rage
Against his worth and native rights engage?

Religious fears their argument are made,

Religious fears his sacred rights invade!

650

Of future superstition they complain,

And Jebusitic worship, in his reign;

With such alarms his foes the crowd deceive,

With dangers fright, which not themselves believe.

Since nothing can our sacred rites remove,

655

Whate'er the faith of the successor prove,

Our Jews their ark shall undisturb'd retain,

At least while their religion is their gain,

Who know by old experience Baal's commands

Not only claim'd their conscience but their lands;

660

They grudge God's titles, how therefore shall they
An idol full possession of the field?

[yield

Grant such a prince enthron'd, we must confess

The people's suff'rings than that monarch's less,

Who must to hard conditions still be bound, 665
And for his quiet with the crowd compound;
Or should his thoughts to tyranny incline,
Where are the means to compass the design?
Our crown's revenues are too short a store,
And jealous fanhedrims would give no more. 670
As vain our fears of Egypt's potent aid;
Not so has Pharaoh learnt ambition's trade,
Nor ever with such measures can comply
As shock the common rules of policy;
None dread like him the growth of Isr'el's king, 675
And he alone sufficient aids can bring;
Who knows that prince to Egypt can give law,
That on our stubborn tribes his yoke could draw,
At such profound expence he has not stood,
Nor dy'd for this so deep his hands in blood: 680
Would ne'er thro' wrong and right his progress take,
Grudge his own rest, and keep the world awake,
To fix a lawless prince on Judah's throne,
First to invade our rights, and then his own;
His dear-gain'd conquests cheaply to despoil, 685
And reap the harvest of his crimes and toil.
We grant his wealth vast as our ocean's sand,
And curse its fatal influence on our land,
Which our brib'd Jews so num'rously partake,
That e'en an host his pensioners would make; 690
From these deceivers our divisions spring,
Our weakness and the growth of Egypt's king:
These with pretended friendship to the state,
Our crowds suspicion of their prince create,
Both pleas'd and frighten'd with the specious cry, 695
To guard their sacred rights and property;
To ruin thus the chosen flock are sold,
While wolves are ta'en for guardians of the fold;
Seduc'd by these we groundlessly complain,
And loath the manna of a gentle reign: 700
Thus our forefathers' crooked paths are trod,
We trust our prince no more than they their God.
But all in vain our reas'ning prophets preach
To those whom sad experience ne'er could teach,

Who can commence new broils in bleeding scars, 705
 And fresh remembrance of intestine wars,
 When the same household mortal foes did yield,
 And brothers stain'd with brothers' blood the field;
 When sons' curs'd steel the fathers' gore did stain,
 And mothers mourn'd for sons by fathers slain! 710
 When thick as Egypt's locusts on the sand,
 Our tribes lay slaughter'd thro' the promis'd land,
 Whose few survivors with worse fate remain
 To drag the bondage of a tyrant's reign:
 Which scene of woes unknowing we renew, 715
 And madly e'en those ills we fear pursue,
 While Pharaoh laughs at our domestic broils,
 And safely crowds his tents with nations' spoils;
 Yet our fierce sanhedrim, in restless rage,
 Against our absent hero still engage, 720
 And chiefly urge, such did their frenzy prove,
 The only suit their prince forbids to move,
 Which till obtain'd they cease affairs of state,
 And real dangers wave for groundless hate.
 Long David's patience waits relief to bring, 725
 With all th' indulgence of a lawful king,
 Expecting still the troubled waves would cease,
 But found the raging billows still increase.
 The crowd, whose insolence forbearance swells,
 While he forgives too far, almost rebels. 730
 At last his deep resentment silence broke,
 Th' imperial palace shook while thus he spoke.

" Then Justice wake, and rigour take her time,
 " For lo! our mercy is become our crime.
 " While halting Punishment her stroke delays, 735
 " Our sov'reign right, Heav'n's sacred trust, decays!
 " For whose support e'en subjects' int'rest calls;
 " Woe to that kingdom where the monarch falls!
 " That prince who yields the least of regal sway,
 " So far his people's freedom does betray. 740
 " Right lives by law, and law subsists by pow'r;
 " Disarm the shepherd, wolves the flock devour.
 " Hard lot of empire o'er a stubborn race,
 " Which heaven itself in vain has try'd with grace,

“ When will our reason’s long-charm’d eyes uncloſe,
“ And Iſr’el judge between her friends and foes ? 746
“ When ſhall we ſee expir’d deceivers’ ſway,
“ And credit what our God and monarchs ſay ?
“ Diſſembled patriots, brib’d with Egypt’s gold,
“ E’en ſanhedrimſ in blind obedience hold ; 750
“ Thoſe patriots’ falſhood in their actions ſee,
“ And judge by the pernicious fruit the tree ;
“ If ought for which ſo loudly they declaim,
“ Religion, laws, and freedom were their aim,
“ Our ſenates in due methods they had led, 755
“ T’ avoid thoſe miſchiefs which they ſeem’d to dread ;
“ But firſt ere yet they propp’d the ſinking ſtate,
“ T’ impeach and charge, as urg’d by private hate,
“ Proves that they ne’er believ’d the fears they preſt,
“ But barb’rouſly deſtroy’d the nation’s reſt. 760
“ O ! whither will ungovern’d ſenates drive,
“ And to what bounds licentious votes arrive,
“ When their injuſtice we are preſs’d to ſhare,
“ The monarch urg’d t’ exclude the lawful heir ?
“ Are princes thus diſtinguiſh’d from the crowd, 765
“ And this the privilege of royal blood ?
“ But grant we ſhould confirm the wrongs they preſs,
“ His ſuff’rings yet were than the people’s leſs,
“ Condemn’d for life the murd’ring ſword to wield,
“ And on their heirs entail a bloody field : 770
“ Thus madly their own freedom they betray,
“ And for th’ oppreſſion which they fear make way ;
“ Succeſſion fix’d by heav’n, the kingdoms bar,
“ Which once diſſolv’d admits the flood of war :
“ Waſte, rapine, ſpoil, without th’ aſſault begin, 775
“ And our mad tribes ſupplant the fence within.
“ Since then their good they will not underſtand,
“ ’Tis time to take the monarch’s pow’r in hand,
“ Authority and force to join with ſkill,
“ And ſave the lunatics againſt their will. 780
“ The ſame rough means that ’ſuage the crowd, appeaſe
“ Our ſenates, raging with the crowd’s diſeaſe.
“ Henceforth unbiaſs’d meaſures let them draw
“ From no falſe gloſs, but genuine text of law :

“ Nor urge those crimes upon religion’s score, 785
“ Themselves so much in Jebusites abhor.
“ Whom laws convict, and only they, shall bleed,
“ Nor Pharisees by Pharisees be freed;
“ Impartial justice from our throne shall show’r,
“ All shall have right, and we our sov’ reign pow’r.”

He said; th’ attendants heard with awful joy, 791
And glad presages their fix’d thoughts employ.
From Hebron now the suff’ring heir return’d,
A realm that long with civil discord mourn’d,
Till his approach, like some arriving god, 795
Compos’d and heal’d the place of his abode,
The deluge check’d that to Judea spread,
And stopp’d sedition at the fountain’s head.
Thus in forgiving David’s paths he drives,
And, chas’d from Isr’el, Isr’el’s peace contrives; 800
The field confess’d his pow’r in arms before,
And seas proclaim’d his triumphs to the shore;
As nobly has his sway in Hebron shown,
How fit t’inherit godlike David’s throne.
Thro’ Sion’s streets his glad arrival’s spread, 805
And conscious Faction shrinks her snaky head;
His train their suff’rings think o’erpaid, to see
The crowd’s applause with virtue once agree.
Success charms all, but zeal for worth distrest,
A virtue proper to the brave and best; 810
’Mongst whom was Jothran, Jothran always bent
To serve the crown, and loyal by descent,
Whose constancy so firm, and conduct just,
Deserv’d at once two royal masters’ trust;
Who Tyre’s proud arms had manfully withstood 815
On seas, and gather’d laurels from the flood;
Of learning yet no portion was deny’d,
Friend to the muses, and the muses’ pride.
Nor can Benaiah’s worth forgotten lie,
Of steady soul when public storms were high; 820
Whose conduct while the Moor fierce onsets made,
Secur’d at once our honour and our trade.
Such were the chiefs who most his suff’rings mourn’d,
And view’d with silent joy the prince return’d;

While those that sought his absence to betray, 825
Press first their nauseous false respects to pay;
Him still th' officious hypocrites molest,
And with malicious duty break his rest.

While real transports thus his friends employ,
And foes are loud in their dissembled joy, 830
His triumphs so resounded far and near,
Miss'd not his young ambitious rival's ear;
And as when joyful hunters' clam'rous train
Some slumb'ring lion wakes in Moab's plain,
Who oft had forc'd the bold assailants yield, 835
And scatter'd his pursuers thro' the field,
Disdaining, furls his mane, and tears the ground,
His eyes inflaming all the desert round,
With roar of seas directs his chasers' way,
Provokes from far, and dares them to the fray; 840
Such rage storm'd now in Absalom's fierce breast,
Such indignation his fir'd eyes confess.

Where now was the instructor of his pride?
Slept the old pilot in so rough a tide,
Whose wiles had from the happy shore betray'd, 845
And thus on shelves the cred'lous youth convey'd?
In deep-revolving thoughts he weighs his state,
Secure of craft, nor doubts to baffle fate;
At least, if his storm'd bark must go adrift,
To baulk his charge, and for himself to shift, 850
In which his dext'rous wit had oft been shown,
And in the wreck of kingdoms sav'd his own:
But now, with more than common danger prest,
Of various resolutions stands possess'd,
Perceives the crowd's unstable zeal decay, 855
Lest their recanting chief the cause betray,
Who on a father's grace his hopes may ground,
And for his pardon with their heads compound.
Him, therefore, ere his fortune slip her time,
The statesman plots t'engage in some bold crime 860
Past pardon, whether to attempt his bed,
Or threat with open arms the royal head,
Or other daring method, and unjust,
That may confirm him in the people's trust.

But failing thus t'ensnare him, nor secure
How long this foil'd ambition may endure,
Plots next to lay him by, as past his date,
And try some new pretender's luckier fate,
Whose hopes with equal toil he would pursue,
Nor cares what claimer's crown'd except the true. 870
Wake, Absalom! approaching ruin shun,
And see, O see for whom thou art undone!
How are thy honours and thy fame betray'd,
The property of desp'rate villains made?
Lost pow'r and conscious fears their crimes create, 875
And guilt in them was little less than fate:
But why shouldst thou, from ev'ry grievance free,
Forfake thy vineyards for their stormy sea?
For thee did Canaan's milk and honey flow,
Love dress'd thy bow'rs, and laurels sought thy brow;
Preferment, Wealth, and Pow'r, thy vassals were, 881
And of a monarch all things but the care.
Oh! should your crimes again that curse draw down,
And rebel arms once more attempt the crown,
Sure ruin waits unhappy Absalom, 885
Alike by conquest or defeat undone.
Who could relentless see such youth and charms
Expire with wretched fate in impious arms?
A prince so form'd with earth's and heav'n's applause,
To triumph o'er crown'd heads in David's cause? 890
Or grant him victor, still his hopes must fail,
Who conqu'ring, would not for himself prevail;
The faction whom he trusts for future sway
Him and the public would alike betray,
Amongst themselves divide the captive state, 895
And found their hydra-empire in his fate.
Thus having beat the clouds with painful flight,
The pity'd youth with sceptres in his sight,
So have their cruel politics decreed,
Must by that crew that made him guilty bleed! 900
For could their pride brook any prince's sway,
Whom but mild David would they chuse t'obey?
Who once at such a gentle reign repine,
The fall of monarchy itself design?

From hate to that their reformati^ons spring, 905
 And David not their grievance, but the king.
 Seiz'd now with panic fear the faction lies,
 Lest this clear truth strike Absalom's charm'd eyes;
 Lest he perceive, from long enchantment free,
 What all beside the flatter'd youth must see. 910
 But whate'er doubts his troubled bosom swell,
 Fair carriage still became Achithophel,
 Who now an envious festival instals,
 And to survey their strength the faction calls,
 Which fraud, religious worship too, must gild; 915
 But oh, how weakly does Sedition build!
 For lo! the royal mandate issues forth,
 Dashing at once their treason, zeal, and mirth!
 So I have seen disastrous chance invade
 Where careful emmets had their forage laid, 920
 Whether fierce Vulcan's rage the furzy plain
 Had seiz'd, engender'd by some careless swain,
 Or swelling Neptune lawless inroads made,
 And to their cell of store his flood convey'd;
 The commonwealth broke up, distracted go, 925
 And in wild haste their loaded mates o'erthrow:
 E'en so our scatter'd guests confus'dly meet,
 With boil'd, bak'd, roast, all jostling in the street,
 Dejecting all, and ruefully dismay'd,
 For shekel without treat or treason paid. 930

Sedition's dark eclipse now fainter shows,
 More bright each hour the royal planet grows,
 Of force the clouds of envy to disperse,
 In kind conjunction of assisting stars.
 Here, lab'ring muse! those glorious chiefs relate 935
 That turn'd the doubtful scale of David's fate;
 The rest of that illustrious band rehearse,
 Immortaliz'd in laurell'd Asaph's verse;
 Hard task! yet will not I thy flight recal;
 View heav'n, and then enjoy thy glorious fall. 940

First write Bezaliel, whose illustrious name
 Forestals our praise, and gives his poet fame;
 The Kenites' rocky province his command,
 A barren limb of fertile Canaan's land,

Which for its gen'rous natives yet could be
Held worthy such a president as he! 945
Bezaliel, with each grace and virtue fraught,
Serene his looks, serene his life and thought.
On whom so largely nature heap'd her store,
There scarce remain'd for arts to give him more! 950
To aid the crown and state his greatest zeal,
His second care that service to conceal;
Of dues observant, firm to ev'ry trust,
And to the needy always more than just;
Who truth from specious falsehood can divide, 955
Has all the gownsmen's skill without their pride;
Thus crown'd with worth from heights of honour won,
Sees all his glories copy'd in his son,
Whose forward fame should every Muse engage,
Whose youth boasts skill deny'd to others' age: 960
Men, manners, language, books of noblest kind,
Already are the conquest of his mind;
Whose loyalty before its date was prime,
Nor waited the dull course of rolling time;
The monster Faction early he dismay'd, 965
And David's cause long since confess'd his aid.

Brave Abdaal o'er the prophets' school was plac'd,
Abdaal! with all his father's virtue grac'd;
A hero who, while stars look'd wond'ring down,
Without one Hebrew's blood restor'd the crown. 970
That praise was his; what therefore did remain
For foll'wing chiefs, but boldly to maintain
That crown restor'd? and in this rank of fame
Brave Abdaal with the first a place must claim.
Proceed, illustrious, happy chief! proceed, 975
Foreseize the garlands for thy brow decreed,
While th' inspir'd tribe attend with noblest strain
To register the glories thou shalt gain;
For sure the dew shall Gilboah's hills forsake,
And Jordan mix his stream with Sodom's lake, 980
Or seas retir'd their secret stores disclose,
And to the sun their scaly brood expose,
Or swell'd above the cliffs their billows raise,
Before the Muses leave their patron's praise.

Eliab our next labour does invite, 985
 And hard the task to do Eliab right:
 Long with the royal wanderer he rov'd,
 And firm in all the turns of fortune prov'd!
 Such ancient service, and desert so large,
 Well claim'd the royal household for his charge. 990
 His age with only one mild heiress blest'd
 In all the bloom of smiling nature dress'd,
 And blest'd again to see his flow'r ally'd
 To David's stock, and made young Othniel's bride!
 The bright restorer of his father's youth, 995
 Devoted to a son's and subject's truth,
 Resolv'd to bear that prize of duty home,
 So bravely fought while fought by Absalom.
 Ah prince! th' illustrious planet of thy birth,
 And thy more pow'rful virtue guard thy worth, 1000
 That no Achithophel thy ruin boast;
 Isr'el too much in one such wreck has lost.

E'en Envy must consent to Helon's worth,
 Whose soul, though Egypt glories in his birth,
 Could for our captive ark its zeal retain, 1005
 And Pharaoh's altars in their pomp disdain:
 To slight his gods was small; with nobler pride
 He all th' allurements of his court defy'd;
 Whom profit nor example could betray,
 But Isr'el's friend, and true to David's sway: 1010
 What acts of favour in his province fall,
 On merit he confers, and freely all.

Our list of nobles next let Amri grace,
 Whose merits claim'd the Abethdin's high place;
 Who, with a loyalty that did excel, 1015
 Brought all th' endowments of Achithophel.
 Sincere was Amri, and not only knew,
 But Isr'el's sanctions into practice drew;
 Our laws, that did a boundless ocean seem,
 Were coasted all, and fathom'd all by him. 1020
 No Rabbin speaks like him their mystic sense
 So just, and with such charms of eloquence;
 To whom the double blessing does belong,
 With Moses' inspiration, Aaron's tongue.

Than Sheva none more loyal zeal have shown, 1025
Wakeful as Judah's lion for the crown,

Who for that cause still combats in his age,
For which his youth with danger did engage.
In vain our factious priests the cant revive,
In vain seditious scribes with libel strive 1030
T'inflame the crowd, while he with watchful-eye
Observes, and shoots their treasons as they fly;
Their weekly frauds his keen replies detect;
He undeceives more fast than they infect.

So Moses, when the pest on legions prey'd, 1035
Advanc'd his signal and the plague was stay'd.

Once more, my fainting muse! thy pinions try,
And strength's exhausted store let love supply.
What tribute Asaph shall we render thee?
We'll crown thee with a wreath from thy own tree!
Thy laurel grove no envious flash can blast; 1041
The song of Asaph shall for ever last.

With wonder late posterity shall dwell
On Absalom and false Achithophel;
Thy strains shall be our slumb'ring prophets' dream,
And when our Sion virgins sing their theme, 1046
Our jubilees shall with thy verse be grac'd;
The song of Asaph shall for ever last.

How fierce his satire loos'd! restrain'd, how tame!
How tender of th'offending young man's fame! 1050
How well his worth and brave adventures styl'd!
Just to his virtues, to his error mild.
No page of thine that fears the strictest view,
But teems with just reproof or praise as due;
Not Eden could a fairer prospect yield, 1055
All Paradise without one barren field;
Whose wit the censure of his foes has past;
The song of Asaph shall for ever last.

What praise for such rich strains shall we allow?
What just rewards the grateful crown bestow? 1060
While bees in flow'rs rejoice, and flow'rs in dew,
While stars and fountains to their course are true;
While Judah's throne and Sion's rock stand fast,
The song of Asaph and the same shall last.

Still Hebron's honour'd happy soil retains 1065
 Our royal hero's beauteous dear remains,
 Who now sails off with winds nor wishes slack
 To bring his suff'rings' bright companion back ;
 But ere such transport can our sense employ,
 A bitter grief must poison half our joy ; 1070
 Nor can our coasts restor'd those blessings see
 Without a bribe to envious Destiny !

Curs'd Sodom's doom for ever fix the tide
 Where by inglorious chance the valiant dy'd.
 Give not insulting Askalon to know, 1075
 Nor let Gath's daughter's triumph in our woe :
 No sailor with the news swell Egypt's pride,
 By what inglorious fate our valiant dy'd.
 Weep, Arnon ! Jordan ! weep thy fountains dry,
 While Sion's rock dissolves for a supply. 1080

Calm were the elements, night's silence deep,
 The waves scarce murm'ring and the winds asleep ;
 Yet Fate for ruin takes so still an hour,
 And treach'rous sands the princely bark devour ;
 Then Death unworthy seiz'd a gen'rous race, 1085
 To virtue's scandal, and the stars disgrace !
 Oh ! had th' indulgent pow'rs vouchsaf'd to yield,
 Instead of faithless shelves a list'd field,
 A list'd field of heav'n's and David's foes,
 Fierce as the troops that did his youth oppose, 1090
 Each life had on his slaughter'd heap retir'd,
 Not tamely and unconqu'ring thus expir'd ;
 But destiny is now their only foe,
 And dying e'en o'er that they triumph too ; 1094
 With loud last breaths their masters 'scape applaud,
 Of whom kind Force could scarce the Fates defraud ;
 Who for such foll'wers lost, O matchless mind !
 At his own safety now almost repin'd.

Say, royal Sir, by all your fame in arms,
 Your praise in peace, and by Urania's charms, 1100
 If all your suff'rings past so nearly prest,
 Or pierc'd with half so painful grief your breast ?

Thus some diviner muse her hero forms,
 Not sooth'd with soft delights, but toss'd in storms ;

Nor stretch'd on roses in the myrtle grove, 1105
Nor crowns his days with mirth, his nights with love;
But far remov'd in thund'ring camps is found,
His slumbers short, his bed the herblefs ground;
In tasks of danger always seen the first, 1109
Feeds from the hedge, and flakes with ice his thirst:
Long must his patience strive with Fortune's rage,
And long opposing gods themselves engage,
Must see his country flame, his friend destroy'd,
Before the promis'd empire be enjoy'd:
Such toil of fate must build a man of fame, 1115
And such to Isr'el's crown the godlike David came.

What sudden beams dispel the clouds so fast,
Whose drenching rains laid all our vineyards waste?
The Spring, so far behind her course delay'd,
On th' instant is in all her bloom array'd: 1120
The winds breathe low, the elements serene,
Yet mark what motion in the waves is seen!
Thronging and busy as Hyblæan swarms,
Or straggled soldiers summon'd to their arms,
See where the princely bark in loosest pride, 1125
With all her guardian fleet, adorns the tide!
High on her deck the royal lovers stand,
Our crimes to pardon ere they touch'd our land.
Welcome to Isr'el and to David's breast!
Here all your toils, here all your suff'rings rest. 1130
This year did Ziloah rule Jerusalem,
And boldly all Sedition's Syrtes stem,
Howe'er incumber'd with a viler pair,
Than Ziph or Shimei to assist the chair,
Yet Ziloah's loyal labours so prevail'd, 1135
That Faction at the next election fail'd,
When e'en the common cry did Justice sound,
And Merit by the multitude was crown'd;
With David then was Isr'el's peace restor'd, 1139
Crowds mourn'd their error, and obey'd their lord.

MACFLECNOE.

ALL human things are subject to decay,
 And when Fate summons monarchs must obey,
 This Flecnœ found, who, like Augustus, young
 Was call'd to empire, and had govern'd long:
 In prose and verse was own'd, without dispute, 5
 Through all the realms of Nonsense absolute.
 This aged prince, now flourishing in peace,
 And bless'd with issue of a large increase,
 Worn out with bus'ness, did at length debate
 To settle the succession of the state; 10
 And pond'ring which of all his sons was fit
 To reign, and wage immortal war with wit,
 Cry'd, "'Tis resolv'd; for Nature pleads, that he
 " Should only rule who most resembles me.
 " Shadwell alone my perfect image bears, 15
 " Mature in dulness from his tender years;
 " Shadwell alone, of all my sons, is he
 " Who stands confirm'd in full stupidity:
 " The rest to some faint meaning make pretence,
 " But Shadwell never deviates into sense. 20
 " Some beams of wit on other souls may fall,
 " Strike through, and make a lucid interval;
 " But Shadwell's genuine night admits no ray,
 " His rising fogs prevail upon the day.
 " Besides, his goodly fabric fills the eye, 25
 " And seems design'd for thoughtless majesty;
 " Thoughtless as monarch oaks that shade the plain,
 " And, spread in solemn state, supinely reign.
 " Heywood and Shirley were but types of thee,
 " Thou last great prophet of tautology! 30
 " E'en I, a dunce of more renown than they,
 " Was sent before but to prepare thy way,
 " And, coarsely clad in Norwich drugget, came
 " To teach the nations in thy greater name.
 " My warbling lute, the lute I whilom strung, 35
 " When to king John of Portugal I sung,
 " Was but the prelude to that glorious day
 " When thou on silver Thames didst cut thy way,

“ With well-tim’d oars before the royal barge,
 “ Swell’d with the pride of thy celestial charge, 40
 “ And big with hymn, commander of an host,
 “ The like was ne’er in Epſom blankets toſt.
 “ Methinks I ſee the new Arion ſail,
 “ The lute ſtill trembling underneath thy nail.
 “ At thy well-ſharpen’d thumb from ſhore to ſhore 45
 “ The trebles ſqueak for fear, the baſſes roar;
 “ Echoes from Piſſing-Alley Shadwell call,
 “ And Shadwell they reſound from Aſton-Hall.
 “ About thy boat the little fiſhes throng,
 “ As at the morning toaſt that floats along. 50
 “ Sometimes, as prince of thy harmonious band,
 “ Thou wield’ſt thy papers in thy threshing hand.
 “ St. Andre’s feet ne’er kept more equal time,
 “ Not e’en the feet of thy own Psyche’s rhyme,
 “ Though they in number as in ſenſe excel; 55
 “ So juſt, ſo like tautology they fell,
 “ That, pale with envy, Singleton forſwore
 “ The lute and ſword which he in triumph bore,
 “ And vow’d he ne’er would act Villerius more.”
 Here ſtopp’d the good old ſire, and wept for joy, 60
 In ſilent raptures of the hopeful boy:
 All arguments, but moſt his plays, perſuade
 That for anointed Dulceſs he was made.
 Cloſe to the walls which fair Auguſta bind,
 (The fair Auguſta much to tears inclin’d) 65
 An ancient fabric, rais’d t’ inform the ſight,
 There ſtood of yore, and Barbican to light;
 A watch-tower once; but now, ſo Fate ordains,
 Of all the pile an empty name remains:
 From its old ruins brothel houſes riſe, 70
 Scenes of lewd loves, and of polluted joys,
 Where their vaſt courts the mother-ſtrumpets keep,
 And, undiſturb’d by watch, in ſilence ſleep.
 Near thoſe a nurlery erects its head,
 Where queens are form’d, and future heroes bred, 75
 Where unfledg’d actors learn to laugh and cry,
 Where infant punks their tender voices try,
 And little Maximins the gods deſy.

Great Fletcher never treads in buskins here,
 Nor greater Johnson dares in socks appear; 80
 But gentle Simkin just reception finds
 Amidst this monument of vanish'd minds:
 Pure clinches the suburban muse affords,
 And Panton waging harmless war with words.
 Here Flecnoe, as a place to fame well known, 85
 Ambitiously design'd his Shadwell's throne;
 For ancient Decker prophesy'd, long since,
 That in this pile should reign a mighty prince,
 Born for a scourge of wit and flail of sense,
 To whom true Dulness should some Psysches owe, 90
 But worlds of misers from his pen should flow;
 Humorists and hypocrites it should produce,
 Whole Raymond families, and tribes of Bruce.

Now Empress Fame had publish'd the renown
 Of Shadwell's coronation through the town. 95
 Rouz'd by report of Fame, the nations meet,
 From near Bunhill and distant Watling-street.
 No Persian carpets spread th' imperial way,
 But scatter'd limbs of mangled poets lay;
 From dusty shops neglected authors come, 100
 Martyrs of pies, and reliques of the bum.
 Much Heywood, Shirley, Ogleby, there lay,
 But loads of Shadwell almost choak'd the way:
 Bilk'd stationers for yeomen stood prepar'd,
 And Herringman was captain of the guard. 105
 The hoary prince in majesty appear'd,
 High on a throne of his own labours rear'd;
 At his right hand our young Ascanius sat,
 Rome's other hope, and pillar of the state;
 His brows thick fogs, instead of glories, grace, 110
 And lambent Dulness play'd around his face.
 As Hannibal did to the altars come,
 Swore by his fire a mortal foe to Rome;
 So Shadwell swore, nor should his vow be vain,
 That he till death true Dulness would maintain, 115
 And in his father's right and realm's defence.
 Ne'er to have peace with wit, nor truce with sense.

The king himself the sacred unction made,
As king by office, and as priest by trade.

In his sinister hand, instead of ball,

120

He plac'd a mighty mug of potent ale;

Love's kingdom to his right he did convey,

At once his sceptre and his rule of sway,

Whose righteous lore the prince had practis'd young,

And from whose loins recorded Psyche sprung. 125

His temples last with poppies were o'erspread,

That nodding seem'd to consecrate his head.

Just at the point of time, if Fame not lie,

On his left hand twelve rev'rend owls did fly.

So Romulus, 'tis sung, by Tiber's brook,

130

Prefage of sway from twice six vultures took:

Th' admiring throng loud acclamations make,

And omens of his future empire take.

The fire then shook the honours of his head,

And from his brows damps of oblivion shed

135

Full on the filial Dulness: long he stood,

Repelling from his breast the raging god,

At length burst out in this prophetic mood.

“Heavens bless my son! from Ireland let him reign,

“To far Barbadoes on the western main;

140

“Of his dominion may no end be known,

“And greater than his father's be his throne;

“Beyond Love's kingdom let him stretch his pen!”—

He paus'd, and all the people cry'd, “Amen!”

Then thus continued he: “My son, advance

145

“Still in new impudence, new ignorance:

“Success let others teach, learn thou, from me,

“Pangs without birth, and fruitless industry.

“Let virtuosos in five years be writ,

“Yet not one thought accuse thy toil of wit:

150

“Let gentle George in triumph tread the stage,

“Make Dorimant betray, and Loveit rage;

“Let Gully, Cockwood, Fopling, charm the pit,

“And in their folly shew the writer's wit;

“Yet still thy fools shall stand in thy defence,

155

“And justify their author's want of sense.

- " Let them be all by thy own model made
 " Of dulness, and desire no foreign aid ;
 " That they to future ages may be known,
 " Not copies drawn, but issue of thy own. 160
 " Nay, let thy men of wit, too, be the same,
 " All full of thee, and diff'ring but in name ;
 " But let no alien Sedley interpose,
 " To lard with wit thy hungry Epsom prose :
 " And when false flow'rs of rhet'ric thou wouldst cull,
 " Trust Nature, do not labour to be dull, 166
 " But write thy best, and top, and in each line
 " Sir Formal's oratory will be thine :
 " Sir Formal, though unsought, attends thy quill,
 " And does thy northern dedications fill. 170
 " Nor let false friends seduce thy mind to fame,
 " By arrogating Johnson's hostile name.
 " Let Father Fleecnoe fire thy mind with praise,
 " And Uncle Ogleby thy envy raise.
 " Thou art my blood, where Johnson had no part ;
 " What share have we in nature or in art ? 176
 " Where did his wit on learning fix a brand,
 " And rail at arts he did not understand ?
 " Where made he love in Prince Nicander's vein,
 " Or swept the dust in Plyche's humble strain ? 180
 " Where sold he bargains, whip, stitch, kiss my arse,
 " Promis'd a play, and dwindled to a farce ?
 " When did his muse from Fletcher scenes purloin,
 " As thou whole Eth'rege dost transfuse to thine ?
 " But so transfus'd as oil and waters flow, 185
 " His always floats above, thine sinks below.
 " This is thy province, this thy wond'rous way,
 " New humours to invent for each new play :
 " This is that boasted bias of thy mind,
 " By which one way to dulness 'tis inclin'd ; 190
 " Which makes thy writings lean on one side still,
 " And in all changes that way bends thy will.
 " Nor let thy mountain-belly make pretence
 " Of likeness ; thine's a tympany of sense ;
 " A tun of man in thy large bulk is writ, 195
 " But sure thou'rt but a kilderkin of wit.

“ Like mine, thy gentle numbers feebly creep ;
 “ Thy tragic muse gives smiles, thy comic sleep.
 “ With whate’er gall thou set’st thyself to write,
 “ Thy inoffensive satires never bite. 200
 “ In thy felonious heart tho’ venom lies,
 “ It does but touch thy Irish pen, and dies.
 “ Thy genius calls thee not to purchase fame
 “ In keen iambics, but mild anagram.
 “ Leave writing plays, and chuse for thy command
 “ Some peaceful province in acrostic land ; 206
 “ There thou mayst wings display, and altars raise,
 “ And torture one poor word ten thousand ways :
 “ Or, if thou wouldst thy diff’rent talents suit,
 “ Set thy own songs, and sing them to thy lute.” 210

He said, but his last words were scarcely heard,
 For Bruce and Longvil had a trap prepar’d,
 And down they sent the yet declaiming bard.
 Sinking, he left his drugget robe behind,
 Borne upwards by a subterranean wind : 215
 The mantle fell to the young prophet’s part,
 With double portion of his father’s art. 217



THE MEDAL.

A SATIRE AGAINST SEDITION.

EPISTLE TO THE WHIGS.

FOR to whom can I dedicate this poem with so much justice as to you? It is the representation of your own hero; it is the picture drawn at length, which you admire and prize so much in little. None of your ornaments are wanting, neither the landscape of your tower, nor the rising sun, nor the *Anno Domini* of your new sovereign's coronation. This must needs be a grateful undertaking to your whole party, especially to those who have not been so happy as to purchase the original. I hear the graver has made a good market of it: all his kings are bought up already; or the value of the remainder so enhanced, that many a poor Polander, who would be glad to worship the image, is not able to go to the cost of him, but must be content to see him here. I must confess I am no great artist; but sign-post painting will serve the turn to remember a friend by, especially when better is not to be had: yet, for your comfort, the lineaments are true; and though he sat not five times to me, as he did to B. yet I have consulted history, as the Italian painters do when they would draw a Nero or a Caligula, though they have not seen the man, they can help their imagination by a statue of him, and find out the colouring from Suetonius and Tacitus. Truth is, you might have spared one side of your Medal: the head would be seen to more advantage if it were placed on a spike of the tower, a little nearer to the sun, which would then break out to a better purpose.

You tell us, in your preface to the No-protestant Plot, that you shall be forced hereafter to leave off your modesty. I suppose you mean that little which is left you; for it was worn to rags when you put out this Medal. Never was there practised such a piece of notorious impudence in the face of an established government. I believe, when he is dead, you will wear

him in thumb-rings, as the Turks did Scanderberg, as if there were virtue in his bones to preserve you against monarchy. Yet all this while you pretend not only zeal for the public good, but a due veneration for the person of the king. But all men, who can see an inch before them, may easily detect those gross fallacies. That it is necessary for men in your circumstances to pretend both is granted you; for without them there could be no ground to raise a faction. But I would ask you one civil question; what right has any man among you, or any association of men, to come near to you, who, out of parliament, cannot be considered in a public capacity, to meet, as you daily do, in factious clubs, to vilify the government in your discourses, and to libel it in all your writings? Who made you judges in Israel? or how is it consistent with your zeal for the public welfare to promote sedition? Does your definition of loyal, which is to serve the king according to the laws, allow you the license of traducing the executive power with which you own he is invested? You complain that his Majesty has lost the love and confidence of his people; and, by your very urging it, you endeavour, what in you lies, to make him lose them. All good subjects abhor the thought of arbitrary power, whether it be in one or many. If you were the patriots you would seem, you would not at this rate incense the multitude to assume it; for no sober man can fear it, either from the king's disposition or his practice, or even, where you would odiously lay it, from his ministers. Give us leave to enjoy the government, and benefit of laws under which we were born, and which we desire to transmit to our posterity. You are not the trustees of the public liberty; and if you have not right to petition in a crowd, much less have you to intermeddle in the management of affairs, or to arraign what you do not like; which in effect is every thing that is done by the king and council. Can you imagine that any reasonable man will believe you respect the person of his majesty, when it is apparent that your seditious pam-

phlets are stuffed with particular reflections on him? If you have the confidence to deny this, it is easy to be evinced from a thousand passages, which I only forbear to quote, because I desire they should die and be forgotten. I have perused many of your papers, and to show you that I have, the third part of your No-protestant Plot is much of it stolen from your dead author's pamphlet, called the Growth of Popery; as manifestly as Milton's Defence of the English People is from Buchanan, *De Jure Regni apud Scotos*; or your First Covenant and New Association from the Holy League of the French Guifards. Any one who reads Davila, may trace your practices all along. There were the same pretences for reformation and loyalty, the same aspersions of the king, and the same grounds of a rebellion. I know not whether you will take the historian's word, who says it was reported that Poltrot, a Huguonot, murdered Francis Duke of Guise, by the instigations of Theodore Beza; or that it was a Huguonot minister, otherwise called a presbyterian, (for our church abhors so devilish a tenet,) who first writ a treatise on the lawfulness of deposing and murdering kings of a different persuasion in religion: but I am able to prove, from the doctrine of Calvin, and principles of Buchanan, that they set the people above the magistrate, which, if I mistake not, is your own fundamental, and which carries your loyalty no farther than your liking. When a vote of the House of Commons goes on your side, you are as ready to observe it as if it were passed into a law; but when you are pinched with any former and yet unrepealed act of parliament, you declare that, in some cases, you will not be obliged by it. The passage is in the same third part of the No-protestant Plot, and is too plain to be denied. The late copy of your intended Association, you neither wholly justify nor condemn; but as the papists, when they are unopposed, fly out into all the pageantries of worship, but, in times of war, when they are hard-pressed by arguments, lie close intrenched

behind the council of Trent; so now, when your affairs are in a low condition, you dare not pretend that to be a legal combination; but whensoever you are afloat, I doubt not but it will be maintained and justified to purpose; for indeed there is nothing to defend it but the sword. It is the proper time to say any thing when men have all things in their power.

In the mean time, you would fain be nibbling at a parellel betwixt this Association and that in the time of Queen Elizabeth: but there is this small difference betwixt them, that the ends of the one are directly opposite to the other: one with the queen's approbation and conjunction, as head of it, the other without either the consent or knowledge of the king, against whose authority it is manifestly designed. Therefore you do well to have recourse to your last evasion, that it was contrived by your enemies, and shuffled into the papers that were seized; which yet you see the nation is not so easy to believe as your own jury. But the matter is not difficult to find twelve men in Newgate who would acquit a malefactor.

I have one only favour to desire of you at parting, that when you think of answering this poem, you would employ the same pens against it who have combated, with so much success, against Absalom and Achithophel; for then you may assure yourselves of a clear victory without the least reply. Rail at me abundantly; and, not to break a custom, do it without wit: by this method you will gain a considerable point, which is, wholly to wave the answer of my arguments. Never own the bottom of your principles, for fear they should be treason. Fall severely on the miscarriages of government; for if scandal be not allowed you are not freeborn subjects. If God has not blessed you with the talent of rhyming, make use of my poor stock, and welcome: let your verses run upon my feet; and, for the utmost refuge of notorious blockheads, reduced to the last extremity of sense, turn my own lines upon me, and, in utter despair of your own satire, make me satirize myself. Some of

you have been driven to this bay already ; but, above all the rest, commend me to the Non-conformist parson who writ the Whip and Key. I am afraid it is not read so much as the piece deserves, because the bookseller is every week crying *help*, at the end of his Gazette, to get it off. You see I am charitable enough to do him a kindness, that it may be published as well as printed, and that so much skill in Hebrew derivations may not lie for waste-paper in the shop. Yet I half suspect he went no farther for his learning than the index of Hebrew names and etymologies, which is printed at the end of some English bibles. If Achithophel signify the brother of a fool, the author of that poem will pass with his readers for the next of kin : and perhaps it is the relation that makes the kindness. Whatever the verses are, buy them up, I beseech you, out of pity ; for I hear the Conventicle is shut up, and the brother of Achithophel out of service.

Now footmen, you know, have the generosity to make a purse for a member of their society who has had his livery pulled over his ears ; and even protestant socks are bought up among you, out of veneration to the name. A dissenter in poetry from sense and English will make as good a protestant rhymist as a dissenter from the church of England a protestant parson. Besides, if you encourage a young beginner, who knows but he may elevate his style a little above the vulgar epithets of profane and saucy Jack, an atheistic scribbler, with which he treats me, when the fit of enthusiasm is strong upon him ? by which well-mannered and charitable expressions I was certain of his sect before I knew his name. What would you have more of a man ? He has damned me in your cause from Genesis to the Revelations, and has half the text of both the Testaments against me, if you will be so civil to yourselves as to take him for your interpreter, and not to take them for Irish witnesses. After all, perhaps, you will tell me, that you retained him only for the opening of your cause,

and that your main lawyer is yet behind: now, if it so happen, he meet with no other reply than his predecessors, you may either conclude that I trust to the goodness of my cause or fear of my adversary, or disdain him, or what you please: for the short of it is, it is indifferent to your humble servant whatever your party says or thinks of him.

THE MEDAL.

A SATIRE AGAINST SEDITION.

Per Garium populos, mediæque per Elidis urbem,
Ibat ovans, Divumque sibi poscebat honorem. *Virg.*

OF all our antic sights and pageantry,
Which English idiots run in crowds to see,
The Polish Medal bears the prize alone,
A monster more the fav'rite of the town
Than either fairs or theatres have shown. 5
Never did Art so well with Nature strive,
Nor ever idol seem'd so much alive;
So like the man, so golden to the sight,
So base within, so counterfeit and light:
One side is fill'd with title and with face, 10
And, lest the King should want a legal place,
On the reverse a tow'r the town surveys,
O'er which our mounting sun his beams displays.
The word, pronounc'd aloud by shrieval voice,
Lætatur, which, in Polish, is Rejoice: 15
The day, month, year, to the great act are join'd,
And a new canting holiday design'd.
Five days he sat, for every cast and look,
Four more than God to finish Adam took:
But who can tell what essence angels are, 20
Or how long heav'n was making Lucifer?
O, could the style that copy'd ev'ry grace,
And plough'd such furrows for an eunuch face,
Could it have form'd his ever-changing will,
The various piece had tir'd the graver's skill? 25
A martial hero first, with early care,
Blown, like a pigmy by the winds, to war;

A beardless chief, a rebel ere a man,
So young his hatred to his prince began ?
Next this, how wildly will ambition steer ! 30
A vermin wriggling in th' usurper's ear,
Bart'ring his venal wit for sums of gold,
He cast himself into the faint-like mould ;
Groan'd, sigh'd, and pray'd, while godliness was gain,
The loudest bagpipe of the squeaking train. 35
But as 'tis hard to cheat a juggler's eyes,
His open lewdness he could ne'er disguise :
There split the saint ; for hypocritic zeal
Allows no sins but those it can conceal.
Whoring to scandal gives too large a scope : 40
Saints must not trade, but they may interlope.
Th' ungodly principle was all the same,
But a gross cheat betrays his partner's game.
Besides, their pace was formal, grave, and slack ;
His nimble wit outran the heavy pack ; 45
Yet still he found his fortune at a stay,
Whole droves of blockheads choking up his way ;
They took, but not rewarded, his advice ;
Villain and wit exact a double price.
Pow'r was his aim ; but thrown from that pretence,
The wretch turn'd loyal in his own defence, 51
And malice reconcil'd him to his prince.
Him, in the anguish of his soul, he serv'd,
Rewarded faster still than he deserv'd,
Behold him now exalted into trust, 55
His counsels oft' convenient, seldom just.
E'en in the most sincere advice he gave,
He had a grudging still to be a knave.
The frauds he learn'd in his fanatic years,
Made him uneasy in his lawful gears ; 60
At best as little honest as he could,
And, like white witches, mischievously good.
To his first bias longingly he leans,
And rather would be great by wicked means.
Thus, fram'd for ill, he loos'd our triple hold, 65
Advice unsafe, precipitous, and bold ;

From hence those tears, that ilium of our woe,
 Who helps a pow'ful friend, forearms a foe.
 What wonder if the waves prevail so far,
 When he cut down the banks that made the bar? 70
 Seas follow but their nature to invade,
 But he by art our native strength betray'd.
 So Samson to his foe his force confest,
 And to be shorn lay slumb'ring on her breast;
 But when this fatal counsel, 'found too late, 75
 Expos'd its author to the public hate,
 When his just sov'reign, by no impious way,
 Could be reduc'd to arbitrary sway;
 Forsaken of the hope he shifts his sail,
 Drives down the current with a pop'lar gale, 80
 And shews the fiend confess'd without a veil.
 He preaches to the crowd that pow'r is lent,
 But not convey'd, to kingly government;
 That claims successive bear no binding force;
 That coronation oaths are things of course: 85
 Maintains the multitude can never err,
 And sets the people in the papal chair.
 The reason's obvious, int'rest never lies;
 The most have still their int'rest in their eyes;
 The pow'r is always theirs, and pow'r is ever wise. 90
 Almighty Crowd! thou shorten'st all dispute,
 Pow'r is thy essence, wit thy attribute;
 Nor faith nor reason make thee at a stay,
 Thou leap'st o'er all eternal truths in thy Pindaric way!
 Athens, no doubt, did righteously decide, 95
 When Phocion and when Socrates were try'd;
 As righteously they did those dooms repent,
 Still they were wise whatever way they went;
 Crowds err not, tho' to both extremes they run,
 To kill the father and recal the son. 100
 Some think the fools were most as times went then,
 But now the world's o'erstock'd with prudent men.
 The common cry is e'en religion's test;
 The Turk's is at Constantinople best;
 Idols in India, Popery at Rome, 105
 And our own worship only true at home:

And true, but for the time ; 'tis hard to know
How long we please it shall continue so.

This side to-day, and that to-morrow burns ;
So all are God-almighties in their turns.

110

A tempting doctrine, plausible and new ;
What fools our fathers were if this be true !

Who, to destroy the seeds of civil war,
Inherent right in monarchs did declare ;

And, that a lawful pow'r might never cease,
Secur'd succession to secure our peace.

115

Thus property and sov'reign sway at last
In equal balances were justly cast ;

But this new Jehu spurs the hot-mouth'd horse,
Instructs the beast to know his native force,

120

To take the bit between his teeth, and fly
To the next headlong steep of anarchy.

Too happy England, if our good we knew
Would we possess the freedom we pursue !

The lavish government can give no more,
Yet we repine, and plenty makes us poor.

125

God try'd us once ; our rebel fathers fought,
He glutted them with all the pow'r they fought,

Till master'd by their own usurping brave,
The freeborn subject sunk into a slave,

130

We loath our m^ana, and we long for quails ;
Ah, what is man, when his own wish prevails !

How rash, how swift, to plunge himself in ill !
Proud of his pow'r, and boundless in his will !

That kings can do no wrong we must believe :
None can they do, and must they all receive ?

135

Help, heav'n ! or sadly we shall see an hour
When neither wrong nor right are in their pow'r !

Already they have lost their best defence,
The benefit of laws which they dispense ;

140

No justice to their righteous cause allow'd,
But baffled by an arbitrary crowd ;

And medals grav'd, their conquest to record,
The stamp and coin of their adopted lord.

The man who laugh'd but once to see an ass
Mumbl'ing to make the cross-grain'd thistle pass,

145

Might laugh again to see a jury chew
The prickles of unpalatable law.
The witnesses that leech-like liv'd on blood,
Sucking for them was med'cinally good ; 150
But when they fasten'd on their fester'd sore,
Then justice and religion they forswore ;
Their maiden oaths debauch'd into a whore.
Thus men are rais'd by factions, and decry'd,
And rogue and saint distinguish'd by their side, 155
They rack e'en scripture to confess their cause,
And plead a call to preach in spite of laws.
But that's no news to the poor injur'd page,
It has been us'd as ill in ev'ry age ;
And is constrain'd, with patience, all to take ; 160
For what defence can Greek and Hebrew make ?
Happy who can this talking trumpet seize,
They make it speak whatever sense they please,
'Twas fram'd at first our oracle to inquire ;
But since our sects in prophecy grow higher, 165
The text inspires not them, but they the text inspire.
London ! thou great emporium of our isle !
O thou too bounteous, thou too fruitful, Nile !
How shall I praise or curse to thy desert,
Or separate thy sound from thy corrupted part ? 170
I call'd thee Nile the parallel will stand ;
Thy tides of wealth o'erflow the fatten'd land ;
Yet monsters from thy large increase we find
Engender'd on the slime thou leav'st behind.
Sedition has not wholly seiz'd on thee ; 175
Thy nobler parts are from infection free :
Of Isr'els tribes thou hast a num'rous band,
But still the Canaanite is in the land.
Thy military chiefs are brave and true,
Nor are thy disenchant'd burghers few, 180
The head is loyal which thy heart commands,
But what's a head with two such gouty hands ?
The wise and wealthy love the surest way,
And are content to thrive and to obey ;
But wisdom is to sloth too great a slave ; 185
None are so busy as the fool and knave.

Those let me curse, what vengeance will they urge,
 Whose ordures neither plague nor fire can purge,
 Nor sharp experience can to duty bring,
 Nor angry heav'n, nor a forgiving king! 190
 In gospel-phraze their chapmen they betray;
 Their shops are dens, the buyer is their prey:
 The knack of trades is living on the spoil;
 They boast e'en when each other they beguile.
 Customs to steal is such a trivial thing, 195
 That 'tis their charter to defraud the king.

All hands unite of ev'ry jarring sect;
 They cheat the country first, and then infect.
 They for God's cause their monarchs dare dethrone,
 And they'll be sure to make his cause their own. 200
 Whether the plotting Jesuit laid the plan
 Of murd'ring kings, or the French puritan,
 Our sacrilegious sects their guides outgo,
 And kings and kingly pow'r would murder too.

What means their trait'rous combination less, 205
 Too plain t'evade, too shameful to confess?
 But treason is not own'd when 'tis descry'd;
 Successful crimes alone are justify'd.

The men who no conspiracy would find,
 Who doubts but, had it taken, they had join'd? 210
 Join'd in a mutual cov'nant of defence,
 At first without, at last against, their prince.
 If sov'reign right by sov'reign pow'r they scan,
 The same bold maxim holds in God and man:
 God were not safe, his thunder could they shun; 215
 He should be forc'd to crown another son.

Thus when the heir was from the vineyard thrown,
 The rich possession was the murd'ers' own.
 In vain to sophistry they have recourse;
 By proving theirs no plot, they prove 'tis worse. 220
 Unmask'd rebellion, and audacious force;
 Which, tho' not actual, yet all eyes may see
 'Tis working, in th' immediate pow'r to be;
 Far from pretended grievances they rise,
 First to dislike, and after to despise, 225

Then, Cyclop like, in human flesh to deal,
 Chop up a minister at ev'ry meal;
 Perhaps not wholly to melt down the king,
 But clip his regal rights within the ring;
 From thence t'assume the pow'r of peace and war, 230
 And ease him by degrees of public care:
 Yet, to consult his dignity and fame,
 He should have leave to exercise his name,
 And hold the cards, while Commons play'd the game.
 For what can pow'r give more than food and drink, 235
 To live at ease, and not be bound to think?
 These are the cooler methods of their crime,
 But their hot zealots think 'tis loss of time;
 On utmost bounds of loyalty they stand:
 And grin and whet like a Croatian band, 240
 That waits impatient for the last command.
 Thus outlaws open villany maintain;
 They steal not, but in squadrons scour the plain;
 And if their pow'r the passengers subdue,
 The most have right, the wrong is in the few. 245
 Such impious axioms foolishly they show,
 Nor in some soils republics will not grow;
 Our temp'rate isle will no extremes sustain
 Of pop'lar sway or arbitrary reign,
 But slides between them both into the best, 250
 Secure in freedom, in a monarch blest.
 And tho' the climate, vex'd with various winds,
 Works thro' our yielding bodies on our minds,
 The wholesome tempest purges what it breeds
 To recommend the calmness that succeeds. 255

But thou, the pander of the people's hearts,
 O crooked soul, and serpentine in arts!
 Whose blandishments a loyal land have whor'd,
 And broke the bonds she plighted to her lord:
 What curses on thy blasted name will fall! 260
 Which age to age their legacy shall call?
 For all must curse the woes that must descend to all.
 Religion thou hast none; thy Mercury
 Has pass'd thro' ev'ry sect, or theirs thro' thee;

But what thou giv'st, that venom still remains, 265
 And the pox'd nation feels thee in their brains.
 What else inspires the tongues and swells the breasts
 Of all thy bellowing renegado priests,
 That preach up thee for God, dispense thy laws,
 And with the scum ferment their fainting cause; 270
 Fresh fumes of madness raise, and toil and sweat
 To make the formidable cripple great?
 Yet should thy crimes succeed, should lawless pow'r
 Compass those ends thy greedy hopes devour,
 Thy canting friends thy mortal foes would be; 275
 Thy god and theirs will never long agree:
 For thine (if thou hast any) must be one
 That lets the world and humankind alone;
 A jolly god, that passes hours too well
 To promise heav'n, or threaten us with hell; 280
 That unconcern'd can at rebellion sit,
 And wink at crimes he did himself commit.
 A tyrant theirs; the heav'n their priesthood paints
 A conventicle of gloomy sullen faints;
 A heav'n, like Bedlam, slovenly and sad, 285
 Foredoom'd for souls with false religion mad.

Without a vision poets can foreshow
 What all but fools by common sense may know.
 If true succession from our isle should fail,
 And crowds profane with impious arms prevail, 290
 Not thou, nor those thy factious hearts engage,
 Shall reap the harvest of rebellious rage,
 With which thou flatt'rest thy decrepit age,
 The swelling poison of the sev'ral sects,
 Which wanting vent the nation's health infects, 295
 Shall burst its bag; and, fighting out their way,
 The various venoms on each other prey.
 The presbyter, puffed up with sp'ritual pride,
 Shall on the necks of the lewd nobles ride,
 His brethren damn, the civil pow'r defy, 300
 And parcel out republic prelacy:
 But short shall be his reign; his rigid yoke
 And tyrant pow'r will puny sects provoke,

And frogs and toads, and all the tadpole train, 304
 Will croak to heav'n for help from this devouring crane.
 The cut-throat sword and clam'rous gown shall jar
 In sharing their ill-gotten spoils of war :
 Chiefs shall be grudg'd the part which they pretend ;
 Lords envy lords, and friends with ev'ry friend
 About their impious merit shall contend. 310
 The surly Commons shall respect deny,
 And juggle Peerage out with property :
 Their gen'ral either shall his trust betray,
 And force the crowd to arbitrary sway ;
 Or they, suspecting his ambitious aim, 315
 In hate of kings shall cast anew the frame,
 And thrust out Collatine that bore that name.
 Thus inborn broils the factions would engage,
 Or wars of exil'd heirs or foreign rage,
 Till halting vengeance overtook our age ; 320
 And our wild labours, weary'd into rest,
 Reclin'd us on a rightful monarch's breast. 322

-----Pudet hæc opprobria vobis
 Et dici potuisse, et non potuisse refelli.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.



CONTENTS.

	Page.
THE Life of the Author,	v
Advertisement,	i

VERSES IN PRAISE OF MR. DRYDEN.

On Mr. Dryden's Religio. By the Earl of Roscommon,	3
From Mr. Addison's Account of the English Poets,	4
On Alexander's Feast. From Mr. Pope's Essay on Criticism,	5
Character of Dryden, from an Ode of Gray's,	ib.
To the unknown Author of Absalom and Achithophel, by N. Lee,	6
To the unknown Author of Absalom and Achithophel, by R. Duke,	7
To the concealed Author of Absalom and Achithophel, by N. Tate,	ib.
Upon the Author of the Medal, a Satire,	9
To the unknown Author of the Medal, a Satire,	10
To Mr. Dryden, on his Religio Laici,	11

MISCELLANIES.

Astræa Redux,	1
An Account of Annus Mirabilis, in a Letter to the Hon. Sir Robert Howard,	10
Dedication, to the Metropolis of Great Britain,	19
Annus Mirabilis,	21
Britannia Rediviva,	61
Preface to Religio Laici,	71
Religio Laici; or, a Layman's Faith,	83
Threnodia Augustalis,	95
Heroic Stanzas, on the Death of Oliver Cromwell,	109
Satire on the Dutch,	114
Absalom and Achithophel. To the Reader,	116
Key,	119
Part I.	122
Part II.	149
Macflecnoe,	178
Epistle to the Whigs,	184
The Medal, a Satire,	189

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